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NEW THEORY

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REDEMPTION,

UPON PRINCIPLES EQUALLY AGREEABLE TO

REVELATION *and* REASON.

“ And, I think, Men cannot do a greater Injury to sacred History,
“ than by giving such Representations of Things recorded there
“ as to make them unintelligible or incredible; as on the other
“ Hand, we cannot deserve better of Religion and Providence
“ than by giving such fair Accounts of all Things proposed by
“ them, or belonging to them, as may Silence the Cavils of
“ Infidels, satisfy the Inquisitive, and recommend them to the
“ Belief and Acceptance of all reasonable Men.”

BURNET'S THEORY.

VOL I.

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VOL. I.

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As the Author lived at a Distance from the Press,
some Errors have escaped ; among which, the
Reader is desired to correct the following :

Page 4, line 22, *for* understanding it *read* understanding of
it. P. 11, l. 7, *f.* propatura *r.* propatulo. P. 37, l. 23, *f.*
contradiction of their *r.* contradiction to their. P. 56, l. 3,
f. defunetorum *r.* defunctorum. P. 66, l. 17, *f.* glimmering
as the *r.* glimmering of the. Ditto. l. 19, *f.* in so much *r.*
in as much. P. 137, l. 1. *f.* that where they *r.* that when
they. P. 144, l. 3, *f.* what originally *r.* what was original-
ly. P. 190, l. 6, *f.* proceeding *r.* preceding. P. 221, l. 3,
f. impurity *r.* impunity. P. 242, l. 3, *f.* would *r.* could.
P. 251, l. 8, *f.* sovereign *r.* foreign. P. 256, l. 8, *f.* immor-
tality *r.* mortality. P. 257, l. 24, *f.* the Son *r.* the infinitely
Son. P. 283, l. 9, *f.* that is *r.* that it is. P. 305, l. 23,
f. revolve *r.* resolve. P. 344, l. 23, *f.* reason *r.* season.
P. 366, l. 8, *f.* It is, *r.* Is it. P. 389, l. 2 *f.* probably
r. probable.

INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION.

THE fall of Adam being the ground-work of the Redemption by Jesus Christ, it is a matter of the most serious consequence to rescue the former from every circumstance of suspicion, in order to establish and confirm the latter; for if the foundation should in any part be shaken, the superstructure must in proportion totter. This important doctrine of our original lapse, however, has been, through misapprehension, greatly injured; nothing has been more the subject of dispute; but nothing, perhaps, has been left more unsatisfactory and perplexed to a sincere enquirer, who would pay a due regard to reason on the one side and revelation on the other. For while some exhibit

bit such accounts of the Deity as are quite shocking to humanity, their adversaries rush so precipitately into the opposite extreme as to deny the plainest declarations of Scripture, and destroy the very vitals of Christianity; the extravagance of the Calvinists one way has made the Socinians as rash and desperate another; nor have they who have attempted to steer a middle course, and thus avoid the extremes on each side of the question, been at all successful in their endeavours. Indeed, whether we follow the Calvinists, Arminians, or Socinians, we must sacrifice some essential part of natural or revealed religion; nor can the principles of both, upon any of the usual hypotheses of the fall (like the iron and clay of Nebuchadnezzar's image) be made to consolidate and cement together.

In the sequel this will be particularly pointed out; in the mean while I must entreat the reader not to prejudge this proposal to render the doctrine of Redemp-
tion

tion less perplexed (after so many have trodden the same path before me) as vain chimerical or presumptuous; the subjects that have been most disputed, like the roads that have been most beaten and frequented, are not always found in the most advantageous state, but sometimes susceptible of the greatest alteration and improvement. There is a strong presumption too that the right apprehension of this matter has not been hitherto discovered: since notwithstanding so long continued a contest and debate between the several sects, they are no way nearer a conclusion now than they were at first setting out. Where truth is perfectly on one side, the victory is soon decided; but where it lies divided between the contending parties, there is room for a variety of contradiction and mutual triumph; as a scale soon preponderates that bears all the weight itself, but hangs doubtfully in air suspended, when that which opposes it has nearly an equal force to counteract it. To those who have faith sufficient to believe that there is any absolute

lute truth or certainty attainable in the subject, this will appear a striking sign of some reciprocal strength and weakness in the contending parties ; when there is not enough to be said in support of either, but too much to be advanced by each against the other, for an impartial person to receive perfect satisfaction on the matter.

- But I need not employ much time to persuade men that they have not an adequate and proper apprehension of the subject ; the difficulty will be to convince them that this is capable of attainment by us, it being an almost universal opinion, that the Redemption is either incomprehensible in itself, or to our present faculties. Many think it too ridiculous and absurd a scheme to bestow the least attention on ; others too mysterious and sublime a doctrine for man to aspire at any competent understanding it ; and they who do not deride the folly of endeavouring to reconcile it, as a thing impossible or repugnant

pugnant in itself, are not less disposed to censure the presumption of attempting to explain a matter so high above the reach of all human comprehension. It will not be very easy then to procure attention to a proposal toward illustrating a doctrine, that is, according to established orthodoxy, so superior to the contemplation, and, according to the fashionable philosophy of the times, so inferior to the notice and unworthy the regard of reason. Every essay toward improvement is exposed to the reproach of vanity and presumption, till it is established by approved success; and there is none, perhaps, more obnoxious to this censure than a scheme of reconciling the Redemption to human understanding. But if truth be found, it will finally prevail; which in many cases would have remained for ever buried, if some men had not possessed the resolution to attempt, what it has appeared to others chimerical to propose; and it is notorious that not only the Redemption, but the universe has heretofore been deemed a mystery and repugnancy to reason. The

The foundation of the one is well known to have been an original misapprehension of the works of nature, and similar to this I am disposed to think the occasion of the other ; whether I am right or wrong in my conception, an endeavour to set an obscure doctrine in a clear light is laudable ; and, in opposition to the prevailing prejudice, I beg leave to transcribe the following sentiment of a great writer, as an apology for this presumption. He says, “ that as it is owned the whole scheme of “ Scripture is not yet understood ; so if it “ ever come to be understood before the “ restitution of all things, and without “ miraculous interpositions, it must be in “ the same way as natural knowledge is “ obtained ; viz. by the continuance and “ progress of learning and liberty ; and by “ particular persons attending to, comparing and pursuing intimations scattered “ up and down in it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made ; by “ thoughtful

“ men’s tracing on obscure hints, as it
“ were, dropped us by nature accidentally,
“ or which seem to come into our minds
“ by chance. Nor is it at all incredible,
“ that a book which has been so long in
“ the possession of mankind, should con-
“ tain many truths as yet undiscovered.
“ For all the phenomena, and the same
“ faculties of investigation, from which
“ such great discoveries in natural know-
“ ledge have been made in the present and
“ last ages, were equally in the possession
“ of mankind several thousand years be-
“ fore.” *Butler’s Analogy of Natural and
Revealed Religion*, part 2, chap. iii. page
262.

Had such liberality of sentiment been
more prevailing, perhaps much greater
progress in this work would have been
already made ; things that are not at-
tempted cannot be accomplished ; and as
nothing contributes more to make those
impossible that are not, than a persuasion
that they are, so the notion men have en-
tertained

tertained of the Redemption being an unfathomable depth, has probably been one main cause of their not penetrating further to the bottom of it. An opinion that any thing is an inexplicable mystery, is the most likely means, whether it be or not, to render it for ever such: the great proficiency that men have made in the science of the universe has, in all probability, proceeded from the free use of reason with regard to it, and their not considering it as an object too transcendent for the exercise of their intellectual faculty; the wonderful success that has been obtained by the application of which to the book of nature, should have inspired Divines with more resolution in their attempts toward unfolding that of revelation. But, alas! it has hitherto been followed by no such effect, and all the influence that the great discoveries in relation to the universe have had in this respect, is to persuade Divines that the phenomena thereof alone are capable of investigation. "Doubtless, says Mr. "Duché,

“ Duché, the powers of reason are great
 “ with respect to outward things : she can
 “ readily and aptly contemplate the world
 “ of nature around us ; and without much
 “ difficulty comprehend all the wonderful
 “ discoveries that have been made in na-
 “ tural philosophy. Hitherto can she go,
 “ but no farther ; the phœnomena of the
 “ material universe, and the laws on which
 “ they are grounded, are the only objects
 “ within the narrow limits of her unenlight-
 “ ened eye.”

This passage is justly selected for ani-
 madversion, from the discourses of Mr.
 Duché, by the Critical Reviewers for No-
 vember, 1780 : the notion is however not
 peculiar to him, but too much the doc-
 trine of orthodox divines in general ; tho’
 to a rational enquirer it seems strange,
 that the Supreme Being should be so much
 more intelligible in his works than word ;
 nor can any reason be assigned why the
 latter should be more mysterious than the
 former, but that it is so in the event. It

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might

might naturally be expected that what God has been pleased to reveal expressly to mankind should lie most within the reach of their comprehension, that in many respects it is not best understood is certain, but still it may be questioned whether this defect proceed from incapacity or error, from any incomprehensibility in the nature of what is revealed, or from the oversights and mistakes of men concerning it. And it is a further presumption in favour of this opinion, that what is now the peculiar language of Divines in relation to mysteries of the faith, was before the improvements of the last century the current doctrine of Philosophers with regard to all the works of nature. Thus Descartes was for excluding the consideration of final causes from philosophy, as a high presumption on omniscience; asserting that we cannot, without rashness, attempt to investigate the ends of God in the creation, and should not be guilty of so much arrogance as to think of being made partakers of his councils; some of which

which are not more manifest than others, but all of them are equally buried in his unfearchable abyfs of wifdom.—Non tantum nobis debemus arrogare, ut ejus conciliorum participes effe poffimus.--Nec fingi poteft aliquos Dei fines magis quam alios in propatura effe ; omnes enim imperfcrutalibi ejus fapientiae abyffo funt eodem modo reconditi. [See *Ray's Wifdom of God in the Creation*, page 38, where thefe paffages are quoted from Descartes, and their places in his works referred to.]

It is neediefs at prefent to infift on the injuriousnefs of fuch fuppoftion, not only to philofophy but religion, by difarming mankind of their only demonftration of a Supreme Being from the wifdom of his works ; which cannot be gathered but from the defign and end of them. For if thefe are neceffarily invifible to us, his wifdom muft be fo in like manner ; which cuts off all the natural proof we have of his exiftence, and has juftly occafioned Descartes to be accufed of promoting the caufe of Atheifm.

Nor shall I enlarge on the folly of this way of thinking, as if whatever was done by an Infinite Being must also be infinite itself, or a finite creature should not be capable of conceiving any of his designs because it cannot comprehend them all.

It is more proper for my purpose to observe, how compleat an echo that which is now the doctrine of divines is of what was once taught by philosophers through ignorance and error, when the wisdom of nature might have been better understood; and that had the latter continued under the force of this delusion, the universe must have remained as great a mystery as Revelation. But happily they broke through it to their immortal honour, and have proved that the presumption lay in limiting and confining the noble faculty of reason that God gave to man, of which it is impossible to say a priori how far it shall not advance, or where the sphere of its proficiency shall end. Nor have they brought less glory to religion than to human

man understanding by it ; for since men have had the fortitude to banish all such ignoble fear and slavish apprehension from philosophy, the very shadow of Atheism has been driven with it from the world ; whereas while their capacity was fettered with it nothing but darkness and misapprehension spread over the face of the creation ; which first involved men in perplexity, and thereupon in infidelity concerning it.

It is hard to say, whether such persuasion as that of Descartes is most the effect or occasion of unbelief, its consequence or cause ; the one is certainly in each respect very strongly connected with the other. For tho' his observations bear the appearance of great modesty and the profoundest reverence of Providence, yet in reality they proceed from nothing but suspicion and distrust of it. The truth is, he had no great notion of wisdom in the creation, when he signified that it could not be found there ; for Descartes was not the
man

man to doubt of his own capacity in any thing, who could undertake to make worlds without consulting Providence, or regarding nature as he did ; in other matters he was not so circumspect against rashness and presumption ; from all which it is no wonder that he has been charged with a direct design of promoting Atheism. Whether this were the case or not, it shews at least how nearly that which appears the height of orthodoxy borders upon infidelity, from which in effect Descartes could not be far ; and whatever was his design, nothing could be more calculated to produce the consequence of Atheism, since while men are debarred from all opportunity of enquiry into Providence, they are precluded from all possibility of improving by it.

Thus do the Cartesian maxims appear not only the effects of blindness, but also the most likely means to keep men always in it ; nor is it improbable that those narrow principles, which have happily been
banished

banished by philosophers, but as unhappily remained among divines, have contributed greatly to the continuance of that mystery and unbelief in matters of Revelation, which heretofore so much prevailed in those of nature while the same sentiments were in vogue concerning it. Nothing is more likely than that the same consequences have been occasioned by the same causes, which appear so exactly fitted to produce each other both in the nature and event of things; there is a fair presumption at least from hence as to the possibility of an improvement in the doctrine of Redemption, to those who believe there is a suitable foundation to proceed upon, and that Revelation is as much the word, as the universe is the work, of a Supreme Being. They who have the largest and noblest faith that the subject is truly of divine original, will likewise have the greatest liberality to think that it may be better illustrated than it is.

BOOK

B O O K I.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE CALVINISTICAL SCHEME OF REDEMPTION.

IN prosecuting this enquiry I shall go through every stage of examination; the question indeed now chiefly lies between Arminians and Socinians, and is whether a Redemption be on any supposition necessary; but I shall not omit the scheme of Calvin, because how little pretensions soever it may have in reason, it has long since the revival of letters been the prevailing notion of Revelation. It is at present deeply interwoven too with many of our best accounts of the Christian doctrine; and is therefore intitled to our consideration, whatever extravagance it

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bears

bears on the face of it, or disgrace it has sunk into with the world in general : not to say that the error of its original has not been yet discovered, nor are they who despise it most entirely free from the principles it is founded on. It is one thing to reprobate, another to rectify a wrong hypothesis, or shew particularly wherein the cause of it consists ; without this however apprehension of error only tends to increase confusion, truth is liable to be condemned with falsehood, and there is imminent danger of the blame being laid where it is not due. Alphonfus affords a striking example of what I am now observing, who from the enormous machinery of the Ptolemaic system was induced to say, that had he been present at the Divine counsel in the beginning, he could have formed the universe upon a better plan. The truth is that however clearly he perceived the absurdity of the supposed scheme of the creation, he had no juster view than others of the real state of things, but was equally involved in ignorance and error, as to this,

with

with the most illiterate and vulgar. The seeming motions of the heavenly bodies, which he thought so contrary to reason, enabled him not to conceive that all these stupendous appearances were occasioned by the diurnal revolution of the earth, and that the extravagance he condemned had no foundation but in his own deluded imagination; the beam was in his own eye which he presumed lay in the universal system, and could he have seen clearly to remove the one, he would have soon perceived that there was none at all existing in the other. Thus his apprehension of what was wrong in reason never taught him the right scheme in nature, or led him nearer the truth of things, but on the contrary drove him farther from it; which also appears to me to have been the case with our bold practitioners upon Redemption. The absurdities of the Calvinistical account are so great and glaring, that they not only reject these but the real doctrine of our deliverance with them; which they think may be accomplished on a much easier plan, and

without any such extraordinary means as the sacrifice of Christ for the removal of such unjustifiable penalties as are proposed. But of these they seldom give themselves the trouble to enquire how far they are founded in Revelation, much less where it is that the ground of the deception lies : such enormities they think are only fit to be condemned upon the face of them, whence with error they reject the truth, and however justly they reproach the consequences of the Calvinists, are in great measure involved in the same oversight with them, as to the principles from whence the conclusions are deduced.

To proceed then with the scheme of Calvin, this cannot be represented better than in the words of the pious author of *The Whole Duty of Man*, who says in his preface to the same, “ that God created
 “ Adam, endued his soul with a full know-
 “ ledge of his duty, and such strength that
 “ he might perform, if he would, all that
 “ was required of him. After this God
 “ made

“made a covenant with him, that if
 “he continued in obedience, then that
 “strength of soul which he had should
 “be continued; and secondly, he should
 “never die, but be taken up into Hea-
 “ven, there to be for ever happy. But
 “on the other side, if he committed sin
 “and disobeyed God, then both he and
 “all his children after him should loose that
 “strength and perfect knowledge which
 “enabled him to do all that God requi-
 “red; and secondly should be subject to
 “death, and not only so but eternal dam-
 “nation in Hell.”

It must be confessed, the latter part of this
 hypothesis seems so irreconcilable with
 reason, that it is no wonder it has given so
 much offence to an enlightened age of free-
 dom; it is far more extraordinary that it
 has prevailed so long as it has done since
 the Reformation. For tho' God might en-
 title the posterity of Adam to what benefits
 he pleased, through the obedience of their
 first parent, yet to subject them to such
 grievous

grievous punishment for his transgression, appears inconsistent with every conception of natural justice.

Some say on this occasion, that Adam was not only the common parent but representative of all his race, and that *his* covenant was strictly theirs; but there can be no room for this supposition, when they were not in being, and could not possibly ordain him to transact for them. No man has a right to engage in such heavy penalties for others without their concurrence, nor could any superior Being justly appoint Adam in their stead; could such a covenant have reasonably been made, it certainly might have been executed, and mankind must have been bound by the consequences of its infringement; but the objection is that it could not be made, and that all such obligation must in itself be void with respect to others, consequently can be no ground for such penalty to be inflicted on them. This account of the covenant is indeed very well adapted to the previous notion

tion of the punishment, and is in all probability a supposititious doctrine founded on it; the propriety and rectitude however of the judgment remains entirely where it was before, and is no more recommended by such fiction than one unjustifiable idea is by the establishment of another on it.

Nor is there any better foundation in reason for such condemnation of the species in pursuance of the corruption of their nature by the fall; “which (it is said) is
 “not only the parent of all actual sin, but
 “also in its own nature brings guilt upon
 “every one that is born into the world;
 “whereby he is bound over to the wrath
 “of God and curse of the law; and so
 “made subject to death with all its miseries, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.”—
Stackhouse's History of the Bible, vol. 1, page 61.

It requires very little discernment to perceive that this no way reconciles, but rather aggravates the rigour of the sentence.

tence. For what is the difference between ordaining creatures to eternal misery for an offence committed before they were born, or for corruption entailed upon their nature by it? The latter being supposed equally unavoidable by the posterity of Adam, is equally inadmissible as a reason for such punishment; but further, if there be any distinction in the case it is on the wrong side of the question, and tends to make the representation of the matter worse, instead of better. For with respect to entailing depravity on all men for the sin of one, and thereupon ordaining them after this life to damnation, what is it but to make corruption universal, in order that misery might be everlasting? To propagate the one without exception for a season, that the other might by its means be perpetuated for ever? Never could there be a worse description given of any infernal being than this is of the admirable Author of all perfection; nor is there in any shape a greater contradiction or repugnancy to reason; the necessary deficiency of obedience
in

in the present race, on account of the depravity ingendered by the fall, being the strongest recommendation of such virtue as they are capable of to mercy ; none but a manichean Deity could make any unavoidable imperfection they were born under a foundation for their final misery.

There is no method of evading this, but by saying, that by virtue of the Redemption it is not the case ; God has sufficiently displayed his justness and goodness toward mankind, by providing through the sacrifice of Christ for the removal of that sentence, which otherwise must have been established. The inability of all men to fulfil the righteousness of the law is now dispensed with, and sufficient means are ordained, if they are not wanting to themselves, for their effectual deliverance and salvation. “ To make an agreement between the word of God and his attributes in this particular (says Mr. Stackhouse) we may fairly allow, that there was a covenant between God and man

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“ at the first creation ; that in making that
 “ covenant, Adam, as their head and com-
 “ mon representative, stipulated for all
 “ mankind as well as himself ; and that in
 “ his transgression of it, the guilt and pu-
 “ nishment due thereupon was imputed to
 “ his whole posterity. This we may allow
 “ was the state and condition in which
 “ Adam left us ; but we must remember,
 “ that the whole scheme of man’s salvation
 “ was laid in the Divine decree and coun-
 “ cil from all eternity ; that God foreseeing
 “ man would fall, determined to send his
 “ son to redeem him, and determined to
 “ do this long before the transgression hap-
 “ pened ; so that the wisdom and goodness
 “ of God had effectually provided against
 “ the ill consequences of the fall, by ma-
 “ king it impossible that Adam’s posterity
 “ should become eternally miserable, and
 “ be condemned to the flames and pains of
 “ Hell any other way than thro’ their own
 “ personal guilt and transgression.” *Stack-*
house’s History of the Bible, vol. 1, page 65,
 and *Jenkins’s Reasonableness of the Christian*
Religion, vol. 2, page 265. The

The misfortune of this apology is, that it bears on the face of it a plain confession of the injustice of the proceeding it is designed to palliate and excuse. The principle it is founded on is, that the decree was meant from eternity to be set aside, and made impossible ever to be executed; which strongly indicates the impropriety of ordaining it, and absolute necessity of its reversal. God may indeed have from eternity foreseen the fall, and for very wise reasons, without any obligation, have determined to rescue man from the punishment; but certainly an eternal resolution to supersede it must not be made the ground of its defence; in order to this the sentence should be shewn such as might have been executed in itself, nor can there be a more miserable subterfuge than that of establishing its vindication on its removal.

Such a decree indeed seems only capable of being made in order to be revoked, and the tacit confession of this serves to shew, how nature, when offended, will

reluctate, and betray the violence that is committed on her; but besides the presumption which from hence arises that the law was never made, the necessity of its reversal, which is undeniable from this apology, is utterly repugnant to the scriptural account of grace. For the doctrine of Revelation is that the Redemption of mankind was an extraordinary act of goodness, such as could not have been expected upon any footing of right or justice, but was entirely an effect of overflowing bounty and benevolence. In order then that this may be credible or consistent, the fundamental sentence must be demonstrated compleatly righteous; its vindication cannot proceed from its repeal, for that is never to be deemed an extraordinary act of grace, which is a necessary obligation and demand of justice.

The conduct of the Son of God must be confessed indeed to abound with the most consummate goodness, in submitting to incarnation and death rather than such a
condemnation

condemnation should take effect; *his* justice and mercy cannot be questioned, but how does it destroy the unity of the Godhead, and in what light does it represent the Father to exact, or even to accept such conditions of him for the prevention of a judgment thus unjustifiable in itself? We are told that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, to the end that all who believe in him might not perish but have everlasting life. It would be difficult however, upon this hypothesis, to shew what love there was to either in the case; viz. in ordaining so unreasonable a punishment to mankind, or in requiring so extraordinary a sacrifice of his only begotten son for its prevention.

There is not only an insuperable objection then to the grace and goodness of the Father toward men in the Redemption; as well as his justice in the original decree, but also to his insisting on such satisfaction of the son for the non-performance of it. For this inevitably implies a punishment
incurred

incurred that was necessary to be inflicted on its own account, and could not agreeably to the demands of moral government, have been remitted without extraordinary atonement; but is never to be reconciled with the idea of a decree that cries so loudly for its own recall, and can only be excused by not being executed. The requisition then of such stupendous sacrifice on this occasion appears an additional aggravation of the matter, being no less than an actual transfer of an unrighteous punishment from the race of Adam to the Son of God; there is not even the ordinary pretence of its non-performance to be pleaded for it.

Thus if we offer to approach the present system of Redemption with the eye of reason, or consider it in any view of human understanding, there is nothing more apparent than that it will not in any article bear inspection; whether we reflect on the sin of Adam, or the corruption of his posterity thereby, as the ground of such
condemnation

condemnation to them, the pretended grace of a deliverance, or the necessity of such satisfaction for it; in every particular of the doctrine, there occurs the utmost repugnancy and contradiction to our reason.

But it may be said, perhaps, that this is too presumptuous a method of proceeding, and that our understanding is a very frail foundation to rely on with regard to a mystery of so high a nature, the authenticity of which depends on the sure word of Revelation; nor is there any thing more absurd than to examine that solely by the test of our superficial reason, which is professedly of Divine original, and above the reach of human comprehension. Even with regard to the material world, how many things are credited upon the ground of experience, observation, and testimony itself, which we never could have supposed from reason; but which it would be no less repugnant to the settled persuasion of mankind to contradict than they at first seemed

seemed opposite to human apprehension. Who would have imagined in former ages that this earth is habitable on all sides, and has no need of any thing but its own gravity to support it; that the fleeting ocean is bound thereby, like a bandage round the world; or that it is possible for antipodes to exist? “How many (says a learned author on a similar occasion) “thought they had proved to a demonstration the impossibility of the latter, “yet how weak and foolish do all their “arguments appear to men that know, and “by experience understand the matter? “Others (he observes) have with equal “confidence asserted the motion of the “earth to be impossible, the reason of “which is only the imperfect knowledge “they had of the thing, for as our understanding of it is more enlarged and “cleared, the apparent contradictions vanish. Ought we then not to think all the “absurdities we fancy in the present affair “the effects of our ignorance and partial “knowledge? May not the inconsistencies
we

“ we find in the one be as ill grounded as
 “ those that have been urged against the
 “ others? And have we not reason to sus-
 “ pect, yea believe this to be the case;
 “ since we are sure that we know much
 “ less of God and his attributes, than of
 “ the earth and heavenly motions?” [*King*
on Predestination, &c.] Nor are these the
 only things that surprize the imagination,
 for what more unaccountable than many
 of the events of history, or occurrences of
 life? And yet we do not discredit them,
 when we have no other evidence than the
 relation of others to recommend them;
 tho’ we could not without positive testi-
 mony have conceived them, and can scarce
 reconcile them at last to our apprehension.
 The more extraordinary indeed any ac-
 count seems in itself, the better authority
 we require for it; still however we sub-
 mit to testimony of fact, and when the
 credit of witnesses appears unquestionable,
 receive what could never otherwise have
 been introduced to our belief. And if
 such regard be paid to human evidence,

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how

how much more is due to the Divine? especially in a matter which we do not sufficiently understand, and which is of so sublime a nature that our weak short-sighted apprehension may only serve to mislead and betray us? Revelation is then the only proper oracle to try this system of Redemption by; if we have assurance of the Divine original of the former, and find the latter clearly taught by it; to set up the light of reason (however specious) in opposition to this, is as ridiculous as it would be to put the faint glimmering of a taper in competition with the brightness of the meridian sun.

I so far agree with this mode of arguing as to admit, that the original of the doctrine should certainly be enquired into; objections of reason are good beginnings, but very bad conclusions of philosophy; they are surmises that should make us look more narrowly into things, but should by no means tempt us to reject an account in general, as many do Redemption, without penetrating

penetrating to the bottom of it. Perhaps the circumstances from whence the present system is derived have been misunderstood; the foundation of the absurdity, like that of the Ptolemaic hypothesis, lies deeply buried in some oversight of the imagination, which is very little suspected, and never can be removed without tracing back the doctrine to its fountain head, and searching strictly into the source from whence it came. It has been seen into what ridiculous presumption Alphonfus fell through the neglect of this circumspection; we may be very wise in abstract reason, and at the same time very foolish in our apprehension of things; which we often condemn for not being as we would have them, merely because we understand not what they are. I shall therefore now proceed to examine this system by the proper test of Revelation, which, when rightly understood, will save the necessity of all competition between the authority of itself and reason; and for this there is the more occasion, as it appears not less

extraordinary to many how the doctrine came first to be deduced from Scripture, than how it should have so long continued to prevail over reason.

Mr. Locke says, on the penalty of eating the forbidden fruit, " It seems a strange
 " way of interpreting a law which requires
 " the plainest and most direct words, that
 " by death should be meant eternal life in
 " misery. Could any one suppose by a
 " law which says for felony thou shalt die,
 " not that he should lose his life, but be
 " kept alive in exquisite, endless torments?
 " Besides this they would also have it to be
 " a state of necessary sinning and provoking
 " God by every action that men do, a yet
 " harder interpretation of the word death
 " than the other. Could a worthy man
 " be supposed to put such terms upon
 " the obedience of his subjects? Much
 " less can the righteous God, as a punish-
 " ment of one sin wherewith he is offend-
 " ed, be supposed to put a man under a
 " necessity of sinning continually, and so
 " multiplying

“multiplying the provocation.” [*Reasonableness of Christianity.*]

I shall say nothing further concerning the improbability of the supposition, my present concern is to shew from whence it has been derived; and however extraordinary this hypothesis may seem as to its original as well as in itself (especially, as Mr. Locke observes, to persons that have not been accustomed to systematical interpretations of the Scripture) yet it will be found not wholly destitute of principles to rely on, but to have some appearance of foundation upon facts.

The construction of the law then, which has so much been wondered at, was deduced from nothing less than the event which followed its infringement, and the exposition that is allowed to be given of this in the New Testament; for tho' Moses says not any thing of the corruption of human nature, yet St. Paul asserts, that as by one man sin entered into the world, and death
by

by sin, even so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, *Rom. v. 12* - which is usually interpreted of an universal degeneracy through the first offence, whereby all men have fallen short of the glory of God, and the perfection of obedience they were framed for. I shall not at present enter into the propriety of the interpretation, nor would I be supposed to avow or disavow any thing that follows upon this occasion for my own, otherwise than as the probable foundation on which this hypothesis was built. It suffices for my purpose to observe that from the foregoing passage this depravity of nature has been commonly understood the case, whence it is no wonder that it came to be considered the primary signification of the law; for tho' no person would infer any such conclusion from the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die, without some further key to it; yet as men deemed themselves infallibly assured that such corruption was the consequence, and could not suppose that God was capable of inflicting

flicting any thing but what was comprehended in his law, it was highly natural to consider this the original implication of it. It signified nothing what might be esteemed the plain, direct meaning of the word, or the profane and ordinary sense of it; the scripture, it was judged, must be the best interpretation of itself, and the New Testament of the Old; and since divine inspiration cannot be supposed to have erred in its account of this event, or God to have inflicted more than was ordained; hence it was thought that, whatever may appear to a common reader a priori from the law, the other must be admitted by every profound enquirer as its genuine sense a posteriori from the fact. According to literal interpretation, and indeed apparent reason, Adam would have been put to death immediately on his transgression; the punishment would have been personal like the sin, nor was it to be imagined that his own life would be extended to the period of nine hundred years almost after his offence; much less that millions would be likewise

likewise born to the same condemnation. Nothing of this kind was to be expected from the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die; men however have conformed in their interpretation to the event, and this Mr. Locke himself does when he asks, "how was the penalty fulfilled?" "Adam did eat, but in the day he eat he did not actually die; but was turned out of Paradise from the tree of life, lest he should take thereof and live for ever. This shews that Paradise was a state of immortality, which he lost the very day he eat; his life from thence began to shorten, waste, and have an end; and to his actual death was like the time of a prisoner between sentence passed and the execution, which was in view and certain." [*Reasonableness of the Christian Religion*, *ibid.*] From the same consideration then that men have been led to think so extraordinary a continuance of his life no deviation from the law, have they been induced to look upon his posterity as also originally included in it, for they were
certainly

certainly involved in the event of its transgression. Hence the doctrine that Adam not only contracted for himself but all his race, tho' there is no such thing to be inferred from the covenant itself in Genesis; and from the same train of thinking are we led to trace the further consequence of universal damnation to eternal torment, as well as degeneracy from righteousness. For it is well known that the final punishment of the wicked is commonly described by death in the New Testament; thus it is said that the wages of sin are *death*, that men are servants of sin unto *death*, and that to be carnally minded is *death*, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace; and since there is no doubt of its signifying eternal torment with regard to the future punishment of sinners, this is a certain key to the explanation of it when applied to the original judgment and condemnation that came upon mankind in Adam. Bp. Burnet says, in delivering the opinion of the Calvinists, " Adam was made liable to death, " but not barely to cease to live; for death

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" and

“ and life are terms opposite to one another
 “ in Scripture, and the former ought to be
 “ understood as a word of general signifi-
 “ cation, which we who have the Comment
 “ of the New Testament to guide us in the
 “ understanding of the Old, ought not to
 “ restrain to a natural death ; as therefore
 “ when we are said to be the servants of
 “ sin unto death, we understand much
 “ more thereby, so ought not God’s threat-
 “ ening of Adam with death to be restrain-
 “ ed to a natural death.”—The meaning of
 which is, as the author of the *Whole
 Duty of Man*, in a before cited passage,
 expresses it more at large, that he should not
 only be liable to death, but also to eternal
 damnation in Hell. [See *Burnet’s Exposition
 of the Ninth Article.*]

Thus have I endeavoured to account for
 the original of this hypothesis, of which
 there can be doubt, I think, that it pro-
 ceeded from the event that followed the
 transgression of the law, and the extraor-
 dinary exposition that is supposed to be
 given

given of it in the New Testament. And indeed how harsh soever the consequences may seem in reason, it must be allowed they are not without strong appearance of foundation in the Scripture; it is not easy to imagine how God could have involved the posterity of Adam in his transgression without their being comprehended in his covenant, or have inflicted any thing that was not originally ordained in fact, tho' to us not apparently included in the law. It seems incumbent on us then to take our interpretation from the event, and the subsequent illustration which is given of this by inspiration which cannot err; so that however strange it may appear at first from whence such a system could be derived, it may afterward be deemed no less surprising how it can be denied consistently with the authority from whence it came.

It has been objected to one part of the exposition, that whatever death denotes in relation to the final punishment of the wicked, it is often used in its ordinary

sense by sacred writers as well as by profane ; and has not the signification of life in torment annexed to it always in the Scripture, consequently may not require it here. Thus it is said in *Job* chap. iii. v. 11, &c. Why died I not from the womb ? Why did not I give up the ghost when I came out of the belly ? For now I should have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept ; then should I have been at rest. And verse the 17th, There the wicked cease from troubling, there the weary are at rest ; there the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor. Shortly after which 'tis added, Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul ; which long for death, but it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hidden treasures ; which rejoice exceedingly and are glad when they can find the grave.—The foregoing implies a very different sense of death from that contended for upon the fall, and such it may be observed is the notion that prevails of it in the Old Testament ;

ment; it may even be affirmed that there is no such idea as life in endless torment annexed to it throughout this, whence it may be thought extraordinary that if it were the original meaning of the word, there should be no such apprehension of it found before the publication of the Gospel.

But in opposition to this it is urged, that as Christ brought life and immortality to light thereby, so has he more fully informed men of what without his interposition would have been their fate, than they otherwise would have known but by the fatal experience of the event. The New Testament is a further revelation of the Divine decrees, both with respect to good and evil, than was ever vouchsafed to mankind at large before; and this is not more positive or express in any thing than the signification of death when applied to final condemnation, which would have been the fate of Adam and his whole posterity without the grace and mercy of Redemption.

Redemption. It is well known that there are two sorts of death mentioned in the sacred writings, viz. temporal and eternal; but it is as certain that the last is what would have been the destiny of all mankind in Adam without an extraordinary deliverance from it. Since then everlasting death was unquestionably the fate ordained them, and the meaning of this is as unquestionably defined as any thing can be in the New Testament, there is no room remaining for a doubt of its original signification in the Old; or that the portion of all men would have been, in pursuance of the fall, without Redemption, what that of the wicked will be notwithstanding it at the last day.

I hope the Calvinists will now allow that I have done full justice to their doctrine, and that I have not suppressed any one particular which could be urged in its behalf; the truth is, I have endeavoured to ascertain its principles, and place them in the strongest light, in order to subvert them

them more clearly by the consequences, and thereby to overthrow the system from its foundation. For the last of these will be found so extraordinary when duly searched, that the Calvinists themselves, tho' not apt to start at consequences, will not admit them; had a suitable enquiry into the constituent parts of the hypothesis been only made and the doctrine thus decomposed, it would have saved an infinite deal of trouble to the Free-thinkers, and there would have been no occasion for appealing to Divine attributes, or any external arguments against it; they would have found its principles to involve such conclusions as are utterly repugnant to all faith of Protestants, and as the Calvinists would no more suffer to be deduced from Revelation than the Socinians from reason. But unfortunately this analysis has either not hitherto been made, or not sufficiently attended to; however free the first reformers were with many errors of the dark ages, yet the present, tho' essentially connected with one of the worst among them, remained

remained a mystery too sacred to be enquired into; and it has ever since been implicitly rejected or received from the authority of Reason or Revelation, as men have been differently disposed toward the side of either. How so gross an oversight could be so long committed among Protestants of all denominations, that the necessary connection of this system with a Romish doctrine which has been universally condemned should not be suspected, I shall endeavour to explain when the fact itself has been demonstrated. But in the mean while I must make some preliminary observations tending to prepare the way to it, as well as offer some apology to the reader for a critical examination of opinions that have long since been adjudged below the dignity of reason, and unworthy of the least notice, unless to shew the possible extent of superstition. But if these absurdities had been heretofore considered more minutely in themselves, they might have given men a clearer insight into others from which they are not yet entirely

tirely free ; besides leading them to the foundation of a very antient error, which, however it has been argued and exploded, has never been traced to its original. Even the rust of antiquity has something to engage attention, and excite curiosity as to the cause whereby it was occasioned ; not to say that there is still a more considerable remnant of that rust in being than men are commonly aware of, which very much wants removal.

“ St. Austin (according to Bishop Burnet) considered all mankind as lost in Adam, and in that he made the decree of election to begin ; there being no other reprobation asserted by him, than the leaving of men to continue in that state of damnation in which they were by reason of Adam’s sin. By baptism all men were born again, and recovered out of that lost estate ; yet unless they were within the decree of election they could not be saved, but would certainly fall from that state, and perish in a state of

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“ sin ;

“ fin ; but such as were not baptized
 “ were shut out of all hope, those words
 “ of Christ--except ye be born again of
 “ water and of the Spirit, ye cannot enter
 “ into the kingdom of God, being ex-
 “ pounded so as to import the indispensable
 “ necessity of baptism to eternal salvation.
 “ All who were not baptized were reck-
 “ oned among the damned ; yet this dam-
 “ nation, as to those who had committed
 “ no actual sin, was so mitigated, that it
 “ seemed to be little more than an exclu-
 “ sion from Heaven, without any suffering
 “ or misery, like a state of sleep and inacti-
 “ vity. This was afterward dressed up as a
 “ division or partition in Hell, called the
 “ Limbo of infants ; so by bringing it thus
 “ low they took away much of the hor-
 “ ror that this doctrine might otherwise
 “ have given the world. [*Burnet on the
 Ninth Article.*]

It must be confessed that St. Austin,
 from whom the Calvinists derive their
 doctrine, is in one particular of this opi-
 nion

tion very consistent with himself; as he was
 so full of the condemnation of all mankind
 in Adam, there was no occasion for asserting
 any other punishment of the reprobate
 than leaving of them to continue in the
 state they were involved in by his sin.
 They could not be condemned to more
 than pains of Hell, and since they were
 ordained to these in the death of their first
 parent, all other punishment must cer-
 tainly be needless and superfluous; the
 utmost they were capable of was that of
 being abandoned to the fate to which they
 were originally consigned. Thus far the
 scheme has the advantage of coinciding
 with itself, but it is condemned in every in-
 stance by the Scripture, and is singularly
 preposterous, both with regard to the re-
 probate and the righteous; by anticipating
 the doom of the former, and involving the
 latter for a season in the same dreadful
 situation with them.

First, in relation to the reprobate, how
 shall we reconcile the abandoning of any

to perish in the lost state of their first parent with what St. Paul asserts, that as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all to justification of life? This denotes a remedy as universal as the fall, and the same Apostle particularly assures us also, that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, 1 *Cor.* xv. 22; both elect and reprobate are to be raised again, and thereupon the latter ordained to infernal punishment; an utter contradiction to their sustaining it before, or being finally left to perish in the death of Adam. Nothing can be more repugnant than this to the doctrine of an universal Redemption, Resurrection, and Judgment; the two first of which are impossible, and the last is utterly ridiculous on the supposition of it; for how can any be redeemed or raised who are left to perish in their lost estate; or what can be a greater farce than to propose a future judgment of those who are already consigned to the punishment of everlasting

fire? Instead then of a preterition of any in the destiny of their first parent, whatever it would have been, there is nothing more apparent from the Scripture than that all are to be delivered from it, and afterward the wicked adjudged to infernal punishment; not for the sin of Adam, but their own, viz. for not feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, visiting the sick, &c. so very unfortunate is this hypothesis in every particular relating to the reprobate.

The next part of the doctrine I shall animadvert upon is the Limbo in Hell for those who die unbaptized without having committed any actual sin; which was a contrivance very wisely made, as Bishop Burnet observes, in order to mitigate the horror that the general opinion might have otherwise inspired. It was a very necessary, and at the same time a very arbitrary distinction; a partition entirely of their own making, and what is more, in express contradiction of their own doctrine. For if all who die unbaptized are to be
reckoned

reckoned among the damned, the description of damnation will not admit of any such provision for their repose; for this utterly excludes every idea but that of life in endless torment, nor is there any thing more repugnant to the notion of the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, than any possibility of rest in it. "It was the
 "last prejudice (says Bishop Burnet) against
 "this opinion, that the softening the terms
 "of God's wrath and damnation, which
 "was brought in by the followers of St.
 "Austin, to such a moderate and harmless
 "notion as to be only a loss of Heaven,
 "with a sort of inactive sleep, was an effect
 "of their apprehending that the world
 "would very ill bear an opinion of so
 "strange a sound; and that therefore to
 "make this pass the better, they mitigated
 "damnation far below the representation
 "that the Scriptures generally give of it;
 "which propose it as being adjudged to a
 "place of torment, and a state of misery and
 "horror." [*Burnet on the Ninth Article.*]
 There was no excuse indeed for this exception

exception with regard to infants but the necessity of the case ; which if once admitted will go too far, and prove abundantly too much. For if Reason should be allowed to plead, it would be found equally hard perhaps that any should be condemned to infernal misery for an offence committed before they were born, or a corruption entailed upon their nature by it, as infants without having committed any actual sin ; it was not their choice but necessity that hindered it, for had they lived, they certainly would have sinned as others have ; and since in every other circumstance they are in the same predicament with the race at large, there is no room for an exception in their case ; if there be any such thing as consistency in absurdity required. It must be confessed however that the Calvinists are not all equally guilty of this self-contradiction ; there are some that have done more justice to their doctrine, and not scrupled to ascribe the supposed state of mankind in general to infants as well as other in particular.

cular. The vulgar saying that even Calvin has been charged with, and which I am almost ashamed to mention, is well known, viz. that there are many thousands of souls not a span long in Hell ; the contrary persuasion however of the Limbo for them shews how Reason sometimes will reluctant, and oblige men who are least influenced by it to revolt at consequences, and renounce their principles.

But this is not all ; there is a more material object of enquiry still remaining, such as may plead more powerfully perhaps than the case of infants who die unbaptized without having committed any actual sin ; and that is, what is to become of the elect themselves (those who are not only bapitized but chosen to salvation) during the interval between death and the resurrection ? This may be a very serious question according to the foregoing account, and there should be another Limbo or partition in Hell provided for them by right ; tho' the necessity of the thing appears

appears not to have ever so much as once
 been thought of. For baptism is supposed
 to be a sovereign remedy for the saints,
 and to deliver them as effectually from the
 damnation of mankind in Adam as if no such
 thing had ever happened; but on the princi-
 ple that in pursuance of the death occasioned
 by the fall, all men must, without Redemp-
 tion, have sustained infernal misery for
 ever, it is plain that, as the matter stands,
 they must endure it from their departure
 to the resurrection; the righteous can be
 no more exempt from it for that time than
 the reprobate. For the Redemption grants
 no relief from death but by a resurrection;
 without this our faith is vain, and neither
 baptism nor election will in any shape avail
 us; if then by the prevalence of the for-
 mer, without end or remedy, men must
 have suffered the torment of Hell through-
 out eternity; it is certain that they must
 equally undergo the same from the com-
 mencement of death, till it shall be no
 more; for whatever is its essential quality
 I must

must continue while it remains in being, and till its removal is accomplished.

This is an apprehension that the Calvinists, in the midst of their concern for infants, have never once entertained with regard to the elect; but have all along imagined them to be as secure from danger of infernal fire, as if the curse upon mankind in Adam had never been; which is a direct inconsistency with their deduction of universal damnation to eternal torment without a redemption by it. Others may with great propriety contend, that there is no more relation between temporal and eternal death in nature than duration, being justly accustomed to consider them as quite different things that have no connection with each other but in sound; the former being common to the righteous who are capable of Paradise, and at least rest from their labours; but cannot, either according to reason or scripture, be supposed consigned thereby to any such dreadful pains as are peculiar to the final condemnation

condemnation of the Reprobate. No such distinction however is to be claimed by those who maintain the doctrine of eternal torment to all men through the first transgression; there being no foundation for this, but in the universal death or judgment that came on them to condemnation by it; which whoever suppose the same in quality as would have been for ever without Redemption, are guilty of a contradiction, by presuming any difference at present between them, but in duration. Every one is bound by his own prescription, and they who assert no other Reprobation than the leaving men to continue in the state of damnation wherein they were by reason of Adam's sin, are obliged to consider all as in a most deplorable condition, so long as they are left in it, whatever others may be at liberty to imagine; which was the reason why I was so careful to establish the grounds of this hypothesis beyond controversy in the beginning.

This reminds me of an objection that was made to the foregoing conclusion, by a person whom I acquainted with it, viz. how can the first death be the same in every particular, except continuance, as the second, when the one is without, the other with the body; which must constitute a fundamental difference between them in their nature?

This is a very just objection to the doctrine ab origine, but not at all to the propriety of the charge deduced by me from its own principles against it. The observation strikes at the root of our supposed obnoxiousness by the fate of Adam to the final punishment of the wicked, and if it had occurred to me before, I should have urged it among my other objections to this effect; for how can there be any similitude between the first and second death, when the soul is only capable of being affected by the former in itself, but will be by the latter, through the medium of the body likewise? The
 difference

difference between them must be essential; but is what those must answer for who suppose their sameness, or that there is no other Reprobation than the leaving of men to continue in the state of damnation wherein they were by reason of Adam's sin. Instead of making any thing against what I say, it points out another oversight to my purpose, while the consequence I have charged the doctrine with is no less clear; at the same time however it is but justice to observe that the Calvinists have not been guilty of any peculiar inconsistency on this account of the body, tho' there is certainly a very great one in the thing itself.

For it has been almost an universal error to suppose the body present after death, or as unreasonably to deny its expediency to the soul. Thus Cicero observes it was common among the Heathens to imagine things apud inferos, quæ sine corporibus nec fieri possunt nec intelligi. They spoke of the
deceased

deceased as if these were still alive, and retained the bodies they had been deprived of; according to which the Poets have represented Ixion tormented with perpetual hunger in the midst of plenty, which he dared not touch; Tityus with a vulture preying on his liver, and many other things of the like kind. On the other hand, the Philosophers who saw the folly of supposing the properties of the body where it could not be present, in order to remove this absurdity were driven to deny its use, make the soul a compleat, independant being, and the body a mere nullity or incumbrance. Such was the necessity of their situation, wherein they perceived the dissolution of the latter, but from the want of revelation had no prospect of its renovation; and this scheme, which was excusable in heathens, has unhappily been pursued by divines almost ever since; who have borrowed much more of their notion of a future state from Pagan schools, and metaphysics, than from the suggestions of their own religion.

Thus

Thus they describe the intermediate state as if there were no distinction, or none of any consequence to the soul at least, between it and the Resurrection; they make either no allowance for the body, or such as is ridiculous and absurd, explaining its restitution not from its necessity as an apparatus or accommodation to the soul, but as if it were another person which was associated therewith in this life, and therefore must be made a partner in reward or punishment at the consummation. In the mean while they apprehend the soul to be as completely qualified for every purpose of existence, as if it were no way divested of its appendage; but had all the opportunity of intelligence and communication with the external world, which it so visibly receives at present through the medium of the body only. In short, whatever they may say, they conceive the soul to be as fully blessed or damned without this as it would be with it, and such is the tendency of their description in general;

general; the difference of the Resurrection is a mere name and not a notion with them, or if the latter a very absurd and childish one, that is worse than none at all. It would be almost heresy to hint any such disparity between the separate and final state, as a Philosopher would infer from the privation and presence of the body, or from the removal and renewal of those means which are now so essential to a correspondence of the soul with every object of the creation but itself.

The Calvinists then are far from being the only persons who imagine things *apud inferos quæ sine corporibus nec fieri possunt nec intelligi*; or make no scruple to transfer the souls of the departed immediately to Heaven or Hell, without any further ceremony. For it has been almost an universal error either arbitrarily to suppose the presence of the body where it could not be, or that the soul is capable of doing or suffering
as

as compleatly (and being rewarded or punished accordingly) without as with it. Very few have had any proper notion of the external frame from its experimental use in the accommodation of the man, tho' this is so strongly pointed out by nature and the scripture; the light of both which has hitherto been buried under the rubbish of the schools, nor has the modern philosophy as yet sufficiently prevailed over prejudice to retrieve it.

It is therefore no wonder that the Calvinists have not been sensible of the necessary difference between the separate and final state, or that the condition of mankind could not possibly have been in the death of Adam any way like that of the wicked after the Resurrection; it would rather have been extraordinary if they had perceived it, as it is a distinction that has escaped much better reasoners than themselves. But I thought it surprising after the conclusion occurred to

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me which I have imputed to their principles, that no notion of it ever should be found among them, or any of their opponents; which made me sometimes apprehend, notwithstanding the clearness of the consequence to my own mind, that I must be someway or other under a deception; tho' I was determined to maintain the charge at all events, till I was convinced that it was groundless. This I communicated to the person who made the objection just now mentioned, whom I at last made sensible of the propriety of my observation, and who thereupon suggested what I had long desired in vain to find, viz. a doctrine that corresponded with the conclusion I had drawn from the hypothesis in question. This was nothing more or less than Purgatory, which was no sooner mentioned than it struck me at once, as highly probable to have been derived from the foregoing principles; but upon enquiring further into the account of it, I found

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it to correspond much more minutely with them than I at first expected or imagined.

Bishop Burnet says, that the opinion of the Church of Rome concerning Purgatory is, "That every man is liable both to temporal and eternal punishment for his sins; that God upon the account of the intercession and death of his Son doth indeed pardon sin as to its eternal punishment, but the sinner is still liable to temporal punishment, which he must expiate by acts of penance and sorrow in this world, together with such other sufferings as God shall think fit to lay upon him; but if he do not expiate these in this life, there is a state of suffering and misery in the next world, where the soul is to bear the temporal punishment of its sins; which may continue longer or shorter till the day of judgment. And in order to the shortening of this, the prayers and superogations of men here

“ on earth, the intercession of the saints
 “ in Heaven, but above all things the
 “ sacrifices of the mass, are of great
 “ efficacy.” [Burnet on the Twenty
 Second Article.]

There can be no doubt I think from
 the first reading of this account, that the
 doctrine originated from the ordinary no-
 tion of the fall. I do not pretend to say
 that the Church of Rome has not em-
 bellished it with suitable additions and
 inventions of her own; how far the
 sinner is capable of expiating this temporal
 punishment, that the mediation and death
 of Christ does not extend to, by any
 acts of penance; or of what sufficiency
 the prayers and superogations of men
 on earth, the intercession of the saints in
 Heaven, and the sacrifice of the mass
 may be in order to this I shall not de-
 termine. But that mankind are ordained
 in the death of Adam to a most deplorable
 condition till the day of judgment, by
 the foregoing principles of original con-
 demnation

demnation is unquestionable; there is great need indeed of the prayers of the church according to these for their relief, nor is their situation an arbitrary invention of Popery as has been imagined; whatever may be the validity of the methods proposed to extricate them. Profit has been a superstructure raised upon the doctrine, but was by no means the foundation of it; which will be more apparent the more closely we examine into it.

Bishop Burnet says, "with respect
 "to the foundation of the doctrine, viz.
 "that sins are only pardoned as to their
 "eternal punishment to those who, being
 "justified by faith, have peace with God
 "through our Lord Jesus Christ; there
 "is not a colour for it in the Scriptures."

But whether there be any colour for it or not in the Scriptures, the foundation of it cannot be denied with the least propriety by those who consider death as the original punishment of mankind
 for

for the sin of Adam, or their own in pursuance of it. For in such case what can be more apparent than that, so far as the punishment remains, the sin is not remitted? Do not the Calvinists contend for its being imputed to all mankind from this very principle of the penalty prevailing? Very consistently indeed, for how can the one be more effectually imputed than by infliction of the other? And what then is sin still punished or imputed but unremitted? It is amazing how any should so strangely forget themselves, or be capable of so widely differing with others, when both in reality come so near together. If the death that was established at the fall, would have been the punishment of the species for ever without Redemption, it is certain that nothing but the eternal continuance of this can be remitted now. There is no pretence for saying that the thing itself is yet removed, or that the Redemption has hitherto procured us more than the promise of a Resurrection from it; whence
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it is plain that the everlasting punishment can be only changed at present to a temporal one of the same nature, and that mankind are still as subject to the latter as without a Redemption they would have been to the former.

As a further proof of the exact coincidence between Purgatory and the principles before-mentioned, I beg leave to refer the reader to what has been demonstrated of the former in a treatise stiled, *The Primitive Fathers no Papists*. It seems that since the reformation some of the Romanists have endeavoured to soften and explain away their doctrine ; in opposition to which the author of this essay shews that, however they may prevaricate, their real Purgatory is a place of torment, where the souls of those who are in it undergo the same pains as the damned do ; and that there is no other difference betwixt the fire of it and Hell, than that the one is eternal, the other only temporal. This he proves particularly from the celebrated

brated prayer of the mass, Domine Jesu, Rex gloriæ, libera animas omnium fidelium defunctorum de pœnis inferni, and de profundo lacu; libera eas de ore Leonis, ne absorbeat eas Tartarus, ne cadant in obscurum. Here he justly observes we meet with all the terms by which Hell is described in the word of God; and the same sense he afterwards proves by the comment of Cardinal Capisucchi on them who says, Domine, libera animas omnium fidelium de pœnis inferni; id est, a Purgatorio igne, qui idem prorsus esse perhibetur atque ignis inferni: and in the conclusion he adds, unde ignem Purgatorium, cum idem sit qui ignis inferni, appellat Ecclesia Tartarum.

The next quotation I shall trouble the reader with is from Bishop Burnet, who says that the opinions men fell into “concerning the state of the departed souls in the interval between death and the day of judgment gave occasion enough for prayer, they thought they
 “ were

“ were capable of making a progress, and
 “ having an early Resurrection. They
 “ also had this notion among them that it
 “ was the peculiar privilege of Jesus
 “ Christ to be above all our prayers; but
 “ that none others, not even the apos-
 “ tles and the blessed virgin were above
 “ the prayers of the church. They
 “ thought that this was an act of church
 “ communion that we were to hold even
 “ with the saints in Heaven, to pray for
 “ them.”

I do not so well understand what
 occasion there is to pray for the saints
 in Heaven, but it is very properly ob-
 served that there was enough for it in
 the interval between death and the day
 of judgment; viz. to procure them, if
 possible, an early Resurrection, this being
 the only remedy or relief for them. It
 is also a very coherent notion that it is
 the peculiar privilege of Jesus Christ to
 be above our prayers, he being the on-
 ly person of whom it can safely be said

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that he is risen; as to all others, even the apostles and the blessed virgin, there is imminent danger of their being still in a most deplorable condition; it being far from a certainty that they have made any progress yet, and obtained an early Resurrection. In short, the great difficulty on the foregoing scheme is not how to prove the greatest of the saints in infernal torment, but how to release them from it: here the Papists seem to labour with regard to the efficacy of their masses, as the Calvinists do concerning that of baptism and election. But the prayers of the church were the best remedies that could be thought of in a bad case, and it was very wisely judged that Christ alone was unquestionably above their benefit, nor was even He supposed to be exempt from the dire occasion of them while he remained in death; as is evident from the well known passage in the creed, he went down into Hell, and the comment of the popish catechism upon it.

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It says of this in the first place that it is taken from the receptacle of the damned, wherein the souls of them are tormented with an eternal and unquenchable fire. After which it adds, *præterea est purgatorius ignis, in quo piorum animæ in definitum tempus excruciantur; ut iis in eternam patriam ingressus patere possit, in quam nihil coinquinatum ingreditur.* [See the afore-said treatise of the Primitive Fathers no Papists, page 101.]

But I had no occasion to be so particular about deducing this interpretation of the creed from the Romish catechism, Calvin himself would have furnished me with a very singular instance that is more positive to my purpose, for he says; *si Christus ad inferos descendisse dicitur nihil mirum est, cum eam mortem pertulerit quæ sceleratis ab irato Deo infligitur;* which he shortly afterwards expresses in another phrase, *cum diros in anima cruciatus damnati ac perditæ hominis pertulerit.*

tulerit. [See Bishop Pearson on this article of the creed, where the above passages of Calvin are quoted from his works.]

This is much more than I expected to find, and it is astonishing to me if Calvin supposed not our Saviour himself released from the pains of Hell in death, how he could think of any other person being exempted from them, while under the dominion of it; denial of Purgatory must certainly have proceeded with a very ill grace from him, and it seems as extraordinary to me how he could reconcile his contradiction of it with his description of the death Christ underwent, as how he could suppose our Saviour capable of being in Paradise with the penitent thief at the same time. It may serve however as a specimen to shew, how many palpable contradictions a person may be guilty of in one and the same breath.

Thus

Thus it appears, upon comparison I trust, that Purgatory is nothing but a strict and regular deduction from the common notion of the fall. That man is subject to temporal as well as eternal punishment for sin, and that the latter only through Redemtion is now remitted; that the former remains in full force as ever, and is exactly of the same nature with the other, differing only in duration, not degree; and that the appointed season for its continuance is from death to the day of judgment, without an early Resurrection; all these particulars are so perfectly coincident with the proper conclusion from the foregoing premises of original condemnation, that there can be no doubt, I think, of their derivation from that source.

The most extraordinary circumstance of the whole is, that a similitude so striking should not have been before observed, as I believe it has not by any party or perswasion whatsoever; which,
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if it have not, shews how much doctrines may have been agitated and discussed without being duly searched at last, and may serve as an encouragement to our future enquiries on the subject of Redemption. I cannot say my reading has been very considerable concerning Purgatory, but so far as it has extended, I have not met with the least allusion to it in any account of the fall, or to the fall in any account of Purgatory; should the matter be different from what I imagine, I am liable to correction; in the mean while I cannot but conclude from circumstances, that if the analogy between these doctrines had been before perceived by any of the contending parties upon either of them, the observation must have been more common.

For in the first place, if the Catholics had seen it at the Reformation, nothing could have been more effectual for their purpose, and they would have
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had no occasion for those miserable subterfuges they were driven to in support of Purgatory ; its direct demonstrableness from the notion that still continued sacred with the Calvinists is what must have silenced them ; at least have either obliged them to desist from their contention in this particular, or forced them to a further Reformation of their own opinion.

On the other hand, had the Socinians observed the strict affinity between the Romish and Calvinistic doctrine, they might have encountered the latter much more formidably from the former than from any general reason founded upon attributes ; the reproach of Popery would have been so powerful an objection, especially in the present instance, that not any thing of this kind would have been neglected, had it been perceived ; nor would any system incumbered with it have endured so long, as the Calvinistical has done since the Reformation.

“ Bishop

“Bishop Burnet looks on Purgatory as a remnant of Paganism, and thinks that the opinions of the Platonists, and the fictions of Homer and Virgil setting forth the complaints of departed souls for not being relieved with sacrifices and prayers were the true sources of the doctrine.”

It might have been imagined, that the first words of his description of it, viz. that every man is liable both to temporal and eternal punishment for sin, that the latter indeed is pardoned through the death of Christ, but that the sinner is still subject till the day of judgment to the former, would have referred him to a different original; and shewn him that it was rather a remnant of pure Popery than Paganism, or an error derived in the dark ages from false notions of Christians than of heathens.

But I have the less occasion to be surprized at others not perceiving the foundation

foundation of the doctrine, when I myself had no conception of it after the conclusion from the fall had appeared to me in the strongest light; tho' there was nothing that I more desired to meet with for the confirmation of my theory, than some footstep of a like opinion that had actually prevailed. But as I had no idea of going farther back than the Reformation, (the absurdity that has since prevailed upon the subject appearing to me quite sufficient) it was a long time before I had any apprehension of what I so much wanted; and might have been much longer, had not the hint been suggested to me by another. The similitude between two ideas, must naturally remain unnoticed, when they happen not to be considered, or compared together; and since in all probability neither that of Purgatory, nor the fall has sufficiently been traced to its original, which alone can duly represent the affinity between them, hence it is no wonder that this has not

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hitherto been perceived, however striking the resemblance may be in itself.

The truth is, that the doctrines were at first founded upon error, then accepted upon trust, and at last rejected in like manner; viz. without penetrating to the source of either. Before the Reformation, men had for many ages been accustomed to receive their faith implicitly on credit, which tho' erroneous was systematical, and established upon principles that had been forgotten; and at the Reformation, notwithstanding their eyes were opened in some degree, yet they were only just awaking; at the first dawn of reason they had only a faint glimmering as the truth, which while it enabled them to discover many errors, left them in so much ignorance and blindness with respect to others as their predecessors ever had been. Their progress was rather casual than consistent, and very far from being philosophical or regular; nor is it to be supposed that

that they could pass at once from midnight darkness to meridian light. Thus the Lutherans went from the real presence to consubstantiation, a doctrine that is nearly as absurd; and it is notorious that the Calvinists remained strenuous supporters of many tenets as irrational, as any of the Romish church; the present in particular of original condemnation without Redemption, is more obnoxious than that of Purgatory with it, not to say any thing of the connection that there is between them.

For tho' the belief of the former has so long survived that of the latter, yet it is much more easy to reconcile with infinite perfection, the temporal punishment of the elect, in order to Purgation for their own sin, (the pains of which will afterward be recompenced by everlasting bliss) than the eternal punishment of the whole human race, without remedy or relief, for an offence that could not have been any way prevented

ed by them. There is no comparison between the irrationality of the two suppositions, but abstract reason is what men in these Days had not much concern with; they placed very little dependance on it alone, and it happened that Purgatory was much more obviously condemned by Scripture than the Hypothesis it proceeded from. Any person that could read almost, must see that it could not consist with the promise of Paradise to the penitent thief, or the blessing of immediate rest to those that die in the Lord; whereas the misconstruction of the original decree was not so apparent from the New Testament, which by the strong phrase of judgment coming upon all men to condemnation, rather seemed to countenance the Calvinistical supposition.

To which let me add, that men had probably at the beginning of the Reformation an extraordinary prejudice against Purgatory, from a superior regard from
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their own souls. For it was of no signification to them what would have been the fate of mankind in Adam, so long as the faithful were supposed to be effectually delivered from it by means of Redemption; but it was terrible that neither Baptism nor Election would any more release the righteous than the reprobate from Purgatory without masses, which were very burthensome and expensive remedies. This may be another reason why men were more quick sighted in relation to Purgatory than the fall; they had a real concern in it on their own account, but it mattered not what was liable to become of all or presumed to be the actual fate of multitudes through the first transgression, while the Elect were as circumstances stood secure. The very consideration that so much enhanced the value of Purgatory with the church, was probably what exposed it before any other, to the odium of the people, viz. the dire anguish or expence it inevitably laid them under; which

which difficulty was so easily removed by Baptism and Election.

Be this as it may, however it is certain, that while the Calvinist rejected a particular species of error, he retained as sacred the main body of absurdity from whence it sprang; in the midst of his concern to correct the Catholic and remove a mote out of a brother's eye, he has suffered a beam of superior magnitude to remain unmolested in his own. And when others in process of time began to see more clearly so as to question the common notion of the fall in its turn, its enormity appeared so great that it fell altogether by its own weight; this alone was judged sufficient for its final reprobation by the Socinians, without a proper enquiry into its principles or the consequences that proceeded from them. This appears to me the reason why the analogy between the doctrines, has hitherto escaped the discernment of all parties since the Reformation;

mation; it is not much more surprising that a due analysis of the common Hypothesis of the fall was not made by the Calvinist than the Catholic; but the inconsistency of the scheme, I think would never have escaped the sagacity of the Socinian had he thought fit to enter into an intrinsic examination of it, which was what his pride and confidence of reason scorned. Extremes are naturally productive of each other, and while the Calvinist continued with a Romish credulity to reverence the ordinary account of original condemnation, as a mystery beyond human comprehension, the Socinian rejected it with a rash precipitancy as only proper to be condemned upon the face of it; thus it has never been traced to its fundamentals, so that its communication with Purgatory might be perceived, and thereby the main stock and root of error be removed with the particular branch that grew from it.

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It is very remarkable however that tho' these doctrines have been looked upon totally unconnected since the reformation, yet before it they always went together, and were either rejected or received in conjunction with each other; the Greek church constantly denying both, as the Romish church asserted them. This is what Bishop Burnet who had no notion of their affinity says of them in different places; and is a further presumption, if any such thing can now be wanted, of their derivation from the same principles. In the Exposition of the Article on original sin he asserts, "it is no small prejudice against the Calvinistic notion, that it was so long before it first appeared in the Latin church, and that it was never received in the Greek."

On the Article concerning Purgatory he says, "It would be very easy to shew that the doctrine, as it is now received in the Romish church, was not known in the Church of God for the

“ the first six hundred years, and that then
 “ it began to be doubtfully received; but
 “ the Greek Church never received it.”

Thus much of the Romish and Calvinistic doctrine, with which I should have concluded my animadversion on the latter; but it has another great inconsistency remaining beyond any thing I have mentioned yet; that I cannot forbear to represent, as it will further shew how wonderfully men have been misled by sounds without any attention or regard to things, and that there never was perhaps an instance of their having talked so largely with so little thought upon a subject. It is well known that the great fort employed in favour of the common notion of the fall is the famous passage of St. Paul in the epistle to the Romans, chap. 5, verse 18. There is not a text more frequently inculcated in its behalf than this, which says, that judgment came upon all men to condemnation, *κριμα εις κατακριμα* in the
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original; and Mr. Hervey asserts concerning it, "that the import of the words "together with the connection of the "passage leads us to understand it of a "condemnation to eternal misery."

But without entering into his import of the words or connection of the passage I shall only ask, how is it possible that the Judgment which came on all in Adam could be such, when this very decree pronounces that mankind should be redeemed and triumph? The promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head is too threadbare to be explained; should it be admitted then that all would have been condemned to everlasting misery by law, but were saved by the intervention of grace; yet that they were actually sentenced to the former in the very determination which declared the latter, is what must be allowed a contradiction in terms, I think, if any such thing there can be. St. Paul speaks in the foregoing passage of what
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really came to pass, and not of what would have been, but was; judgment came upon all men to condemnation, and in like manner the free gift to justification of life; and however strong the expression of the former may be, yet whoever consults the original account in Genesis will find, that the assurance of bruising the serpent's head was antecedent to the sentence of death in Adam. Justification was prior to condemnation, so that this could not for one moment have been declared eternal, when before it was pronounced a release from it was promised. Here then the Calvinist, instead of arguing from the event goes far beyond it, and if he fall short of the Catholic in one particular, yet infinitely outdoes him in another. It must be confessed that ample amends are made for denying the temporal punishment of sin on the ground of a Redemption, by asserting the condemnation notwithstanding to have been eternal; which shews again how very rude the first attempt toward a

reformation was, and how abundantly more absurd than the error it was meant to rectify. The truth is that the Romish account is a regular and connected system, tho' founded on false principles; it harmonizes with itself, and may be said to be truly rational on its own grounds; for if these are once admitted, its consequences cannot be denied. On the contrary, the Calvinistical is neither just as to its principles nor conclusions, but is equally in both repugnant, and altogether as much at variance with itself as with scripture or with reason.

Thus uniform and consistent have men been in their course of error, tho' not of reformation; the most probable account of which is that the Romish doctrine was occasioned by a direct progress on mistaken grounds, the Calvinistical by a faint, retrospective view thro' the medium of a few scattered rays of light. Men on their first emerging from Popery had only darkness visible, as I may say, to guide them; and

and it is no wonder that they unravelled not at once the system that was handed down to them with the same regularity as their ancestors had for many ages been putting it together; it is much more difficult to remedy mistakes than make them, or tread back the steps of error that have long been persisted in than after having begun to go forward in them. There are many ways of doing wrong, but there is only one to rectify it when done; viz. by carefully investigating the source from whence any error, however glaring, has proceeded, and strictly pursuing it to the fountain-head from whence it sprang. This is the last method men are apt to be at the pains of, but without it, however just they may be as to a particular amendment, they will ever be in danger of miscarrying in the main; either by adhering to some greater error, or by rejecting as important truth. There cannot be a more striking instance than the subject now affords us of each of these extremes; for as the Calvinists have
blindly

blindly retained a beam in their own eye, while they endeavoured to relieve the Catholics of a mote that was only a small part of it; so have the Socinians no less offended on this occasion by their precipitancy and rashness than the Calvinists by their credulity and carelessness. For in order to remove the obnoxious account of original condemnation they have had recourse to a denial of all Redemption; thus plucking up truth with falsehood by the roots, and reproaching the works of grace, as Alphonfus did those of nature, merely through the want of a better apprehension of them than was entertained by other men.

This was the consequence of their arguing upon abstract reason only, without entering into a particular decomposition of the doctrine, or reduction of it to its constituent parts; which is not the way effectually to banish error, much less is it to establish truth; it only tends to increase confusion by shaking the foundations

dations of both together. Men could never be made duly sensible of the absurdity of the Ptolemaic system before it was found by observation to be false in fact, and inconsistent with its own imaginary ground of sense; but when this appeared, reason could no longer hesitate to decide on the extravagance of all its motions, and folly of so many far-fetched circumvolutions. Till the falshood however of the hypothesis was discovered by a strict search into the creation, its apparent enormity was not sufficient to condemn it; men were obliged to submit to the supposed system of Providence or presumptuously arraign it; and it is no wonder that in such case many maintained the rectitude of what their reason could not but otherwise have disapproved; while others reproached the workmanship they thus egregiously misunderstood. The former attributed the stupendous system to immensity of power and magnified Omnipotence upon the ground of it, as being
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able to perform the greatest things with the same facility as the least; whereas the latter could notwithstanding see no occasion for such vast profusion of machinery and motion, but in the want of just contrivance and defect of wisdom.

Such another effect has opposition to the ordinary notion of the fall from attributes alone created; it has driven men to the seeming necessity of resigning the Scriptures or their reason, and thus instead of discovering to them the ground of their mistake, either established and confirmed them in it, or obliged them to relinquish the faith of a Redemption with it. Thus the Socinian has no more improved upon the Calvinist than the Calvinist had done before upon the Catholic; each has equally incurred the censure above-mentioned of the reformer in the gospel, and rash confidence of reason one way has been as pernicious as blind credulity another; by occasioning the common system to be implicitly rejected

jected as it was before received, and truth, instead of being separated from falshood, to be condemned together with it.

Nor has the Socinian been able entirely to suppress the error of the opposite persuasion notwithstanding; for tho' Calvinism must be confessed to be at present out of fashion, yet it is far from being totally extinguished among Protestants; it was the prevailing opinion of divines to the conclusion of the last century, and there are to this day strong remains of it in our best books of Christianity; not to say that it is still professed by many men of religious principles, however reprobated by the world in general. The only account that can be given of which extraordinary prevalence for so many ages, after mankind began to be enlightened and better things might have been expected of them is, that the doctrine was never properly overturned from its foundation. Men in order to be convinced must be dealt with on their own principles,

ciples, and the prejudice of faith with some is as strong as that of sense with others; till the ground of which prepossession is removed, reason cannot have its proper effect upon them; and you in vain encounter them with it in a quarter, where they are not accessible to the weapon. This, as I said, would never have placed the absurdity of the Ptolemaic system beyond a doubt, had not observation shewn another to be fairly deducible from fact; sense joined its testimony with reason before the authority of the latter was effectually received, and so must faith in the present case before that of either will be thoroughly established.

This is the reconciliation that I propose between them, by shewing that there is a great and fundamental mistake as to what passes for original condemnation; the effects of which are as directly opposite in their tendency to what has been presumed of them, as the real are to the imagined

imagined revolutions in the Heavens. Never was there formed a more false judgment of phænomena throughout than in relation to the fall; as will appear, I trust, when the interpretation of them all comes to be fairly put together; in the mean while I hope that I have not misemployed my pains by a strict search into the inconsistency of the common notion; which, however unworthy it may seem of the attention of an enlightened age, is yet a proof that the greatest absurdities may be too much despised; as in all probability it never would have remained so long, had it not been for the contempt that it was treated with. But as I observed the want of a sufficient power to remove the prejudice of others is by no means the worst consequence of such supercilious reason; the great misfortune of it is, that it hinders us from making a due improvement in ourselves, and profiting as we should do by their mistakes. Had the inseparable connection between Purgatory and the Hypothesis

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in question been before observed, it could not have failed, I think, of working a further Reformation upon Protestants; and if it be supposed that this might have had a proper influence upon error of the last century, I conceive there is a further relation to be discovered toward removing a fundamental one of the present; which is perhaps the last remnant of the dark ages that will ever be abolished. We are far from having arrived at the bottom of the misapprehension yet, and it is with errors superficially exploded, as with wounds healed up without being duly searched; the morbid matter of which remains tho' buried, and is on this account the more dangerous impediment to a recovery. Thus is it with respect to sound doctrine in the present instance, in order to the full attainment of which the deepest errors of antiquity were necessary to be laid open; the investigation of them will, I trust, be eminently conducive to this purpose, and satisfy men that however despicable

despicable any tenets may appear in themselves; yet, when they are traced thro' all their consequences and connections, there is sometimes much to be learned even from the most obsolete, unfashionable and exploded notions.

B O O K I.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE ARMINIAN SCHEME.

I Should now proceed to the proposal of my own system, were there not another that has been embraced in the room of the foregoing, viz. the Arminian; which is the plan adopted by most at present who believe any thing of a Redemption. This is much more moderate and plausible than that of Calvin, but will, on examination, be found incumbered with considerable

able difficulties, which I shall therefore represent; otherwise the necessity and advantage of the scheme I design to recommend will not be sufficiently apparent.

The present Hypothesis proceeds in general on the same principle with the preceding, and only differs from it in the interpretation of death, which is explained by insensibility or extinction, instead of life in exquisite and endless torment. The same idea prevails of the present death being the strict performance of that originally ordained; for tho' it was not immediately inflicted upon Adam (as might have been expected from the law) yet as Mr. Locke expresses it, his life from his condemnation began to shorten, waste, and have an end; consequently might be compared to the state of a prisoner between sentence and execution, which tho' future was in view and certain. Adam was deprived of immortality the moment he was made liable to

to death, and nothing seemed more immaterial than the time of its execution, while it was in substance and effect accomplished. Hence it was inferred that the only ground of hope or footstep of a Redemption consisted in the hint of a future Resurrection, given in the prediction that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpents head; in pursuance of the sentence there would have been an end of all men after this life, the free grace and mercy of Redemption consisted wholly in the promised Resurrection. Thus the New Testament informs us that in Adam all die; in Christ all shall be made alive, 1 Cor. 15, 22, and in another place it says, if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ; Rom. 12, 18. Nothing it was thought could be a clearer definition than this of the peculiar operation and effect of each; by the Fall all were condemned to death,
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by the Redemption all will be raised again to life; accordingly it must be thro' the special grace of the latter, if any such there were, that mankind could have any hope of future restitution; without it everlasting insensibility or extinction after the present state would have been the necessary portion of the whole human race.

Such was the supposed doctrine of Revelation, and reason (it was said,) could not urge any solid objection to it; for eternal life was not originally a debt due from the Creator to the species, their title to it could be only founded on the gracious covenant conferred upon them; the condition of which being broken, the grant was forfeited, consequently became subject to the discretion of the Donor. The continuance of our being afterward was as much a matter of Divine free-will and bounty, as the first formation of it ever was; and the thread of life might on this occasion have either
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been curtailed or totally destroyed at pleasure, even the present state could not of right have been required, much less could there be any title left to immortality in man; when not only the fundamental law on which it was given was subverted, but nature was made insufficient likewise for the performance of that compleat obedience it was originally framed and fitted for. And this life notwithstanding all its frailties and imperfections is abundantly preferable to non-existence, which is evident from the unwillingness of most to part with it, however sorely they sometimes complain of it; but in superadding to it the possibility of regaining everlasting glory through Jesus Christ was manifested a stupendous instance and amazing act of favour, (not only beyond reach of claim, but even of expectation without express assurance) after what had happened.

Such is the ground work and support
of this Hypothesis, which, it must be
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confessed is highly plausible on principles
 of Revelation, and much more tolerable
 in reason than the Calvinistical. There
 is no danger of Purgatory here, nor is
 the consequence of extinction after this
 life by any means so horrid as that of
 everlasting torment to all men without
 Redemption; there is however very con-
 siderable difficulty remaining, while with-
 out the intervention of a Saviour we
 are forced to renounce the necessity of
 a distributive justice in another world,
 and consequently, all pretensions of nature
 on its own account to a due distinction be-
 tween virtue and vice in this. Deists still
 maintain their ground very advantageously
 against believers, while the latter are thus
 obliged to represent Revelation in direct
 hostility with Reason, which they are in ge-
 neral proud of affirming to be only a con-
 firmation of it. At this rate the Scripture
 teaches, that there is no foundation for ex-
 pecting a future state without the sacrifice
 of our Saviour, while the voice of nature
 strongly urges it to be a matter so indispen-
 sable

fable in itself, that without it an indelible blot would lie on the moral government of the creation. Nor is this the sense of Deists only, but of the wisest and best men that have ever lived since the foundation of the world; indeed Divines themselves as earnestly insist upon it on the subject of a future state, however they forget the principle in their manner of explaining Christ's satisfaction, and when they are contending separately for a Redemption. It has ever appeared highly consonant to the Reason of mankind, that God, being a supremely wise and holy Governor, cannot but consider it as a fundamental point of his administration to ordain a difference between his servants, agreeable to their observance of the obligations he has laid them under. That this sacred rule however prevails not in the present stage of Providence is too notorious to need any proof; virtue is indeed in its natural tendency the way to happiness, and vice to misery; yet experience infallibly assures us, that the direction of these different paths is frequently bro-

ken and diverted by a variety of external means and interfering causes. The prosperity or misery of individuals is in the event found very unequal to their good or evil conduct; numbers of the virtuous fail of the proper advantages of their obedience, and suffer manifoldly on its account; while multitudes of the wicked not only avoid the natural penalties of sin, but flourish highly in its practice and by its means. And is it to be presumed of an all-wise and perfect Ruler that he will suffer this to be the final issue and event of things? That his cognizance of the moral conduct of his creatures can be ultimately so unsuitable and indiscriminate? The conclusion is absolutely incompatible with the credit of such high and exalted attributes in the Sovereign Being; who may indeed, defer a due propriety of distribution for a season; but being as he is, cannot supersede it utterly; while he has such perfections in himself, and there is demonstrably such imperfection in the course of Providence as to this great essential, it is
equally

equally evident that the matter must and will be rectified hereafter as that it exists at present.

In opposition to this, it is sometimes argued by Divines, that where there has been deficiency of obedience, there can be no proper title to reward; that the whole world has by sin become more or less obnoxious, consequently has lost all claim to Divine approbation on the plea of its own sufficiency, and can have nothing but the positive assurance of mercy to depend upon. Nothing, say they, but perfect innocence can qualify man in himself for Divine acceptance, and this is what no person since the fall has had any pretensions to; indeed, so far have all departed from it, that the best perhaps may have much more cause to dread the punishment due to their sins, than to require any exalted recompence for their virtue. Should God be extreme to mark what is done amiss, should he proceed to a strict trial with his servants, who could abide his judgment, what individual

individual could be justified in his sight? The great variety and multitude of transgressions that every individual must be conscious of would be enough to humble all such arrogant conceit of merit, and rather dispose him to deprecate than challenge the event of judgment. Who can deny that punishment is due to sin as well as reward to virtue? The one must be as obnoxious as the other is meritorious, and since of the best it can be only said, that they have not been altogether as bad as others, but must be confessed that they labour under great arrears of obligation; such consideration should send them humble to the blood of Christ, and make them joyful to receive any appointed means of atonement for the blots of their most accomplished lives. “ Let innocence, says Bishop Sherlock be your outward garment, and
 “ purity your inward; let not your eye
 “ glance upon the large possessions of your
 “ neighbour, nor so much as one thought
 “ wander toward his wife or daughter;
 let

“ let your heart be the fountain of un-
 “ bounded love and goodness, and the
 “ grave of malice and revenge, where all
 “ injuries and affronts, all resentments
 “ shall be buried, and be as if they were
 “ not ; and when you have gained this
 “ experimental evidence from yourself of
 “ the innocence and goodness of nature,
 “ it will then be time to set up for a
 “ patron of her cause, and to assert her
 “ right to heaven upon the footing of
 “ native righteousness ; till then at least,
 “ how innocent soever you may suppose
 “ others, yet for your own sake wish
 “ there may be a Redemption for sinners ;
 “ that God may visit the world not in
 “ justice, but in mercy.” [Vol. 4, Dis-
 course 3, Page 98.]

It will not be pretended that any man
 can lay claim to such spotless purity
 and perfection, nor is it perhaps a pro-
 per method of proceeding upon the sub-
 ject to appeal to each individual on the
 sufficiency of his own merit ; it is rather
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an argument *ad modestiam* than address to reason, and seems much more calculated at best to work upon his fears and apprehensions than to convince his understanding. Whoever examines duly into the account of his moral conduct, will certainly find sufficient cause to humble him in his idea of his own excellence, and there are few who could think from thence of claiming any extraordinary reward of virtue beyond what they enjoy at present. But this is not the consideration now before us; the point to be determined is not what any individual might presume to claim on his own personal account, but what is the proper rule of administration or most worthy conduct of Providence, for the world in general; there are many things that may justly be expected of the supreme Being from the state of mankind at large, which it would be the highest presumption for any man to arrogate from his own particular consequence or merit. In answer then to the foregoing description of obedience, we shall not offer to deny that all are
far

far distant from it, and that there is great imperfection in the lives of the most upright when compared with it; but how can such absolute purity be required as the indispensable condition of acceptance, or insisted on as the proper rule of trial, where all are sinners, and evil is supposed to be inevitably seated in the frame and constitution of their nature? That this is no way qualified for complete perfection in point of intellectual ability or moral; that it is utterly impossible man should never err, by no means probable that he will but seldom, and that nothing better can be expected even from the unhappy state and circumstances of his being, are points acknowledged by all; especially by those who insist upon the most absolute necessity of obedience. Can we then suppose a rule impracticable and yet required? Is it consistent with the idea of a perfect ruler to establish such conditions of service as none of his creatures are able to perform, and for unavoidable deficiency

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to deny all encouragement to such virtuous efforts or attainments as they are capable of making? Except the inadequate and irregular rewards of nature, will he place those that are sincere and faithful in proportion to their powers on the same footing with the most inveterate and hardened rebels? Such conduct can advance no other cause but vice and universal anarchy, it would amount to nothing less than an abdication of the reins of government, and must destroy all ties of allegiance to the Supreme Being whatsoever. On supposition of this inflexible and rigid rule, all are equally by nature outlaws of the Divine regard, whether guilty only of the lightest and fewest trespasses, or of the most numerous and black transgressions; the same sentence falls on inevitable imperfection and surprise, as on the most gross depravity and corruption; in short, except the insufficient distinction mentioned, there is the same blank of hope portended to the most upright, and of vengeance to the most

most

most abandoned that are capable of existence. That complete obedience should be required of creatures that are duly framed for its performance may indeed be just and reasonable ; but that it should be insisted on or expected from such as are far gone in their original from the power thereof, is altogether as incongruous ; a due dispensation for the insufficiency of the latter being as necessary for the support of any obedience in them, as the strictest requisition can be for the preservation of absolute perfection in the former. In fact, whatever the creatures are whom God ordains or tolerates, it seems highly expedient in itself that he should deal with them as they are, rule in conformity to their nature ; that he should accept a reasonable instead of exacting an impossible obedience, and not by insisting inexorably on what cannot be done, withhold all due distinction between the several degrees of vice and virtue that they may be capable of.

It answers no end to say that this is ordained through Christ, the dispute not being about the certainty of a future state of rewards as well as punishments, in which revelation and reason both agree; but concerning the ground of its expectation, in which they are made materially to differ; the former being understood to signify that mankind would have been born to everlasting perdition without atonement, while the latter maintains a future state to be highly expedient from the present, and on account of that very imperfection of nature which is urged against it.

Various are the attempts to reconcile the different principles, and some are for allowing that there was room for hope in a future state of rewards and punishments but not assurance; that there were considerable reasons for it, but as considerable ones against it; sufficient to excite uncertainty and doubt but not despair, and to darken the prospect of acceptance

acceptance but not destroy it. Their manner of balancing between both sides of the question, and shifting alternately from one to the other without reconciling them in the least together, is so curious, and there are such striking instances of this in Bishops Coneybear and Sherlock, that I must beg leave to exhibit extracts from them, tho' of some length, on this occasion. It will serve to shew that I have not been combating with difficulties of my own raising, and do not misrepresent the most eminent Divines when I charge them with the utmost inconsistency and confusion upon the subject.

The proposition of Bishop Coneybear is, that man is of himself incapable of doing any thing sufficient to repair the mischief which his sin hath caused ; therefore on this footing only must remain without comfort, without hope. [Vol. 2. ser. 4. page 132.]

The substance of what he says on it is,
 “ That there are only two ways men have
 hitherto

hitherto thought of for their relief; which are the sacrifice of Beasts and Reformation. As to the former, what the Apostle says by Divine authority may be concluded even by common reason, it is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin. Their greatest hopes must have been built upon the efficacy of repentance, and for this indeed, something specious at first sight may be said. This is acceptable on its own account, and the whole that man is capable of doing in such circumstances; but then it should be considered at the same time, that man as God's creature is under an indispensable obligation to obey him always. As every faculty of ours is derived from God, so ought it at all seasons to be consecrated to his service; had man continued innocent and never in any case offended, he would still have continued under an obligation to serve and obey God; therefore what would have been but the duty of the saint can make no atonement for the sinner. Our acceptance then on the footing of repentance

ance only is justly to be feared, or at least suspected; and we may reasonably cry out, how shall we escape from the wrath to come.

Notwithstanding this (he adds in the next proposition) a persuasion always hath obtained that God will forgive sin; consequently that some method has been contrived, whatever that method might be, whereby such forgiveness may be vouchsafed consistently with the regard due to the interest of virtue and the divine dignity. Without this how miserable must have been the condition of mankind! To be conscious of sins which deserve a punishment they are altogether incapable of avoiding, must have plunged them into utter despair, have disappointed the enjoyment of any good in life, and instead of bringing them to God in the way of worship and obedience, have kept them at the utmost distance from him; for who would, or indeed could apply to God, while he was supposed to be inexorable? And yet God was worshipped in some sense or other by the whole
race

race of man, his favour was entreated and his displeasure deprecated. Had it not been supposed that the sins of men did not so separate between them and their God as to render all communications impossible between them, might they not have argued thus? Why is not the punishment which is never to be remitted immediately executed upon us, and every capacity of doing more mischief by future sins prevented? How is it that a power is any longer entrusted to us, which we are incapable of using but to the detriment of ourselves and others; which we cannot apply to any good purpose, which wicked men will certainly apply to a bad one? Such an absolute despair must produce at once the most consummate misery and wickedness. But instead of taking any such view of their condition; did they not consider themselves as in a state of trial? As making this life a preparation for a better, and qualifying themselves for the favour of God hereafter? And yet they, as well as we were sensible, that they were incapable of acting an uniform and perfect

part,

part, were liable to frequent failings, and committed on many occasions offences of a more heinous nature. But had they thought themselves absolutely unpardonable, what encouragement could they have to take one further step in virtue? Or how could they beg for that forgiveness which they never hoped for?

Hope then they *did* and hope they *might*, but there is a great deal of difference between hope and assurance. Probability there was from the considerations before suggested, but absolute certainty there could be none without an express declaration of God concerning it. And the reason is plainly this, goodness is not a disposition to communicate all possible good, but only such as is fit and proper to be communicated. How far therefore goodness is concerned to pardon sin upon repentance and reformation cannot be concluded from the meer consideration of goodness itself; we are obliged to make a further enquiry and to consider

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whether

whether it be fit and proper so to do. But can meer human reason sufficiently determine upon this point? Or are we judges of all that it is fit and proper for God to do? In some instances indeed we may pronounce on fitness, in these for example; as God is the Supreme Governor of the world, it is fit that his authority should be sufficiently supported; as virtue is the right state of every rational being, it is fit the cause of it should be maintained, and if these are once violated, it is fit they should be fully vindicated. But alas! these fitnesses apparent to every one are against us. Man hath sinned, cannot of himself repair the mischief of his sin, or prove that it can be repaired at all, at least otherwise than by his punishment. Here then things darken upon us again and leave us in sad perplexity; however, they do not entirely exclude hope, tho' we cannot for certain say sin will be pardoned, neither do we perceive by any certain arguments that it will not. A way there may be to reconcile this with every
divine

divine attribute, to illustrate justice and mercy together, to confirm authority, gain reverence to law, and to repair in the most ample manner the mischiefs which our sin hath caused." [Thus far Bishop Coneybear.]

Scarce was there ever a more striking instance of arguing forward and backward, of changing from one side of a question to the other, and leaving them at last in the utmost contradiction than the foregoing; it is really to be hoped that the divine attributes of justice and mercy, with the doctrines of original Judgment and Redemption that relate to them, are capable of being better reconciled together than these arguments; if they are not, there can be no harmony at all between them.

His lordship sets out with observing that the only ground of hope men had to build upon for forgiveness was the efficacy of repentance, for which indeed

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something specious at first sight might be said; yet that the contrary was justly to be feared, at least suspected, and men had reason to cry out, how shall we flee from the wrath to come?

This he strangely undermines however in the next proposition, by saying, that notwithstanding it, a persuasion always hath obtained, that God would forgive sin, men *did* both hope and *might*, *probability* was on their side; all which he again subverts by asserting, that how far goodness is concerned to pardon sin cannot be concluded from the consideration of itself alone, that we are not judges of what is fit and proper to be done, except in certain instances which are all against us; and from whence 'tis plain that man cannot of himself repair the mischief of his sin, or prove that it was capable of being repaired at all, at least any other way than by his punishment.

How

How then could there be any probability that God would pardon sin, when there were only uncertain considerations for it on which men could not determine, but so many apparent fitnesses against it on which they might? The latter were not only sufficient in this case to counteract the former, but to overbalance them, to darken hope, but to exclude it; and the persuasion which he says ever hath obtained that God would pardon sin, was not only a groundless but presumptuous expectation. The principles on which he asserted that men both did and might hope for forgiveness must have been far worse than precarious, when according to the last account, there were so much more weighty and decisive arguments against them.

But it must be confessed that Bishop Sherlock has outdone Bishop Coneybear in inconsistency on this head; I shall therefore introduce him at present before I conclude with the latter, because his
argument

argument lies more connected with the foregoing than with any other matter I shall animadvert upon. He says, vol. 4, discourse 3, page 96, "Some I know contend that it may be proved from the mercies and goodness of God, that he will forgive sinners. If so, there can be no such thing as Natural Religion; for it is demonstrable from the justice of God, that he must reward virtue and punish vice; and if it be demonstrable too from his mercy that he must forgive sin, then Natural Religion includes the greatest contradiction in nature, viz. that sin necessarily must and necessarily must not be punished. If you say only that it is probable that a merciful God will pity the folly and weakness of human kind, and recede from the strictness of justice in his dealings with them, so say we too; but probability cannot infer necessity, and if it be not necessary that he should do it, it must then depend upon his will whether he will do it or not; and your hopes and your religion must

must be resolved, not into the evidence of nature, but into the evidence of free grace, which evidence can be no other than Revelation."

I shall not contend at present in opposition to his lordship, that there can be no such thing as Natural Religion, if it *cannot* be proved from the mercies and goodness of God that he will forgive sinners, since all mankind are such; or that in this case there can be no such thing as virtue to be rewarded, but only vice to be taken account of in the world. This has been very sufficiently argued by Bishop Coneybear before, if not by myself; I shall therefore only ask, how can it be probable that a merciful God will pity the folly and weakness of mankind, and recede from the strictness of justice in his dealings with them, when it cannot be proved from his mercy and goodness that he will forgive sinners? Yea, when the contrary is demonstrable, and if such forgiveness could be proved, Natural Religion

Religion must include the greatest of all contradictions, viz. that sin necessarily must and necessarily must not be punished? Never was there perhaps a greater contradiction than the present; it even outdoes Bishop Coneybear on probability and moral fitness, to suppose the former capable of existing against demonstration.

Let us now return to what Bishop Coneybear says of a persuasion having ever obtained that God would forgive sin; *consequently* that some method hath been contrived, (whatever that method might be) whereby it may be done consistently with justice.

I answer, there could be no probability of any method whereby forgiveness might be vouchsafed beyond the propriety and meetness of the thing itself; and if the Heathens could not have any sufficient hope of pardon on its own account, they could not on any other account or consideration whatsoever. On the contrary,
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if they were incapable of any certainty from the reasonableness of the thing, they must have been much farther from satisfaction with regard to it in pursuance of any extraordinary circumstances to be fulfilled in its behalf. The necessity of such stupendous means as the incarnation and death of the Son of God (which the Bishop afterward explains the supposed method of forgiveness by) must, if they had any such apprehension, have made the prospect of pardon more remote; the impossibility of vouchsafing it without such incumbrances annexed being a vast, additional obstacle to its expectation, and instead of affording the least view of efficacy to repentance, excluding the most distant hope of any escape from punishment. For if Reformation could not be deemed sufficient merely to procure pardon, how could it be supposed adequate to obtain of God such amazing considerations likewise in order to its accomplishment?

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Accordingly,

Accordingly, if we consult fact on this occasion we shall find, (notwithstanding all the pretended fitnesses to the contrary) that the notion of a future state for the reward of good men tho' imperfect, as well as punishment of bad men, ever has prevailed ; but the Heathens never had an idea of any thing like the necessity of the christian satisfaction for a deliverance from the present death ; unless the sacrifice of beasts, which was very justly exploded by the Bishop in the beginning, may be reckoned such.

Nor is this more agreeable to the apprehension of Heathens than the doctrine itself of Scripture which informs us, that the means whereby Redemption was accomplished were infinitely above all human hope or imagination ; we are there infallibly assured, that nothing similar to such interposition of the son of God in our behalf could have been ever thought of before this was revealed. It is very unlikely then that the occasion of it should be what men have entertained the most sanguine

fanguine hopes of in all ages, without the notion of any such expedient; the application of so extraordinary a method to the attainment of what has ever been a matter of ordinary expectation, is very justly liable to suspicion.

Neither can any thing be more preposterous (as well as in every other respect perverse) than to make the hope of pardon a preliminary to the prospect of satisfaction; it puts that which should be last the first, and that which should be first the last; for certainly the death of Christ should not be preached through remission of sin, but remission of sin through the death of Christ; the expectation of atonement should not be derived from that of forgiveness, but that of forgiveness from atonement. The present method then of leading men thro' the hope of pardon to the idea of any such dispensation as the christian inverts the order of things from the beginning, and lays the foundation on the superstructure instead of the superstructure on the foundation;

besides destroying the very essence of Redemption, which implies, that man must by nature have inevitably perished, and could have originally no prospect of a deliverance but what proceeded from extraordinary assurance.

This is the proper doctrine of the Gospel, as will be proved and reconciled in the sequel; viz. that the condition of man was desperate, like that of the fallen Angels, without Redemption; there was no more possibility in the course of things of his recovery than theirs, the only difference between the catastrophe of each is, that the son of God assumed not the nature of Angels but the seed of Abraham. The foregoing scheme therefore of compounding between natural and revealed Religion (by saying that there were sufficient grounds to excite uncertainty and doubt but not *despair*, to diminish hope but not destroy it) can serve no purpose but to confound them both. This it does effectually, by endangering the prospect

prospect of another life after this from the fundamental exigency of the thing; while at the same time it falls infinitely short of Revelation which declares, that nothing could be more deplorable and hopeless in itself than the situation of man by nature, as well as distant from all possibility of expectation than the supernatural remedy required.

Neither can the exigency of a future state in any other respect be reconciled with that of the Christian sacrifice: but the necessity of either, so far as it is admitted, must for many different reasons banish and exclude the other. It was observed of the probabilities and apparent fitnesses before-mentioned that they are no way compatible or consistent; if the one are right the other must be wrong, and it matters not at present what doubts or perplexities the Heathens may have been in concerning them, the proper consideration is with us on which side truth is to be determined? Is there in reality any ground of expedi-
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ency for a future state in nature, or is there not? If there be, which is a point that very few Divines would choose entirely to deny, it cannot consist with the necessity of atonement; and accordingly we shall find, that the doctrines are no more to be reconciled with each other than the opposite arguments which are said to lead to them. For it is an essential supposition of the satisfaction that it was wholly voluntary both in God and Christ; neither of them was upon any account obliged to bestow it for the salvation of the world, but it was purely a free gift in each that can only be resolved into the most extraordinary grace and mercy. As such then, however necessary it might otherwise have been allowed in order to Salvation, it cannot consist with what is a fundamental law and obligation of the creation, which is presumed to be the case of another life after this; the exigency of the latter cannot coincide with any such absolute freedom and discretion of the former.

There

There are many who would admit the necessity of a future state as apparent beyond a doubt in reason, and at the same time contend for an equal necessity of the satisfaction; but do not pretend that any thing like this could ever be thought of by the heathens, or can be apprehended now by Christians; it being a matter of meer Revelation, which the human understanding cannot attain to any comprehension of.

This is much more modest than the foregoing, but the misfortune is that the mysteriousness of the latter, which might have been very well submitted to in this case is not the proper objection to it; its visible repugnancy to the light of nature is the great difficulty that it labours under, since either the obligation of another life after this, or the absolute gift and grace of the satisfaction must be renounced. There is no way of reconciling them but by making distributive justice a point equally arbitrary with the atonement,

ment, or the atonement equally unavoidable with a distributive justice; which is no less injurious to the value and importance than the bounty and benevolence of the sacrifice in our behalf; besides that it inverts, as I said before, the order of things from the beginning.

For at this rate the death of our Saviour is made the necessary consequence, instead of condition of our Salvation which it should be; it cannot be a fundamental or preliminary thereof in such case, but only a posterior mean in order to an independant end, for which no extraordinary obligation is due on our part; Christ not being the author or original, but only an essential instrument of our Redemption, which could not have been avoided in itself. A consideration so highly derogatory from the meritoriousness and condescension of his Sacrifice with the great duties on us resulting from it, that men may almost as well renounce the doctrine totally as thus deplorably
disgrace

disgrace and strip it of all the dignity and honour due to it.

Others have therefore had recourse to a distinction between a state of immortality and retribution; the latter of which (whatever title we may have to it) does not imply the former, since a short duration may be sufficient for a full redress of all the irregularity and confusion of the present world. This they contend is all that can be required as necessary, but infinitely inferior to that eternal kingdom and incorruptible crown of glory, whereof we are made capable in Christ. Here the reward is as remote from all possibility of expectation as the mean whereby it was procured, and may justly therefore be ascribed to that extraordinary grace, without which there would have been no sort of claim to any such inheritance. "The meer notion of a Retribution, says Dr. Stebbing, does not involve that of Eternity, because a temporary Retribution may serve to justify

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God's Providence, for any thing we can say to the contrary. One stage of being after this, of like or even less duration would perhaps set all irregularities right. Whence, he afterwards adds, we may see the vanity of that pretence of unbelievers, that the Gospel offers us nothing more than meer natural Religion." [See Stebbing's Christianity justified on the Scripture foundation, pages 82 and 94.]

It cannot be denied that there is great disproportion between the reward which is offered us in Christ, and what is to be expected from the present inequality of retribution; and that whoever claim a crown of everlasting righteousness for the service of the most upright here as much over value the distinction necessary, as those depreciate it who deny that there is any due to men after the least failure or imperfection of obedience. The proper objection however is not that Revelation does not promise more through the grace
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of Christ than could otherwise be expected, but less without it; and that the condition of man is represented worse on the footing of meer nature than can justly be supposed from reason. For there is not any reward in scripture inferior to immortality, and if there were, no Hypothesis ever yet prevailed that will admit it; the present in particular, which is the most moderate that has been hitherto adopted, expressly ordains all men to everlasting extinction after this life without Redemption, which equally cuts them off from all prospect of Immortality and Retribution.

Thus justice and mercy are at last but very indifferently reconciled together, and the two great oracles of natural and revealed Religion (which should be uniform and consistent evidences of a future state) assert it on such jarring principles, that instead of confirming they confound the testimony of each other.

For however they agree in inculcating the doctrine of another life, yet while they are thus in direct opposition as to the ground, this is almost as bad as if they differed in the conclusion. Men who are at fundamental variance in principles can never heartily concur in consequences, and the present state of natural and revealed Religion is like that of two witnesses who assert the same thing in the end, but by such contrary ways, that whatever credit is given to the one must necessarily be taken from the other, which excites distrust and jealousy of both. Or to come still more nearly to the point, it is as when positive and circumstantial evidence are in flat contradiction; which when united raise probability to its greatest height, and afford the utmost satisfaction men are capable of obtaining; but when at variance, are productive of the greatest uncertainty and confusion.

Manifold

Manifold and immense has been the mischief hereby occasioned to Religion in general, and Revelation in particular; nothing could be matter of greater concern to the discerning friends, and triumph to the designing enemies of both. For it cannot but be obvious how much the cause of a future state at large must labour in this case, and bad men have accordingly endeavoured to aggravate the breach by artfully supporting natural against revealed Religion; under pretence indeed of maintaining reason, but in reality to undermine both the authority of this and Revelation; by promoting a difference between those that should be allies (like Philip of Macedon among the states of Greece) and upholding the weakest against the strongest side, in order to accomplish their common ruin. Such I doubt not has been the diabolic maxim of many on this occasion, for unquestionably the best evidence of a future state is an express declaration of God himself concerning it. I have seen a quotation
from

from lord Bolingbroke, in which he very freely owns, that the certainty of another life depended chiefly on the scripture, which very well explains the motive of his endeavours to undermine it; the moral presumption of a future state being a frail, insufficient ground for the doctrine to rest firmly on, if he could have subverted the more powerful testimony of a direct Revelation from Heaven in its behalf. This when authenticated, places the matter beyond reach of doubt, but then the supposition of its authenticity may be stronger or weaker, as the account appears more or less agreeable to reason and the natural idea that men have of things; therefore the repugnancy that has hitherto been conspicuous between the expositions of Revelation and original apprehensions of mankind, has occasioned many well-disposed persons who would have had no objection to either on account of a future judgment, to think lightly of them both when they were thus at variance with each other. And
this

this difesteem has been increased of the scripture in particular by the abundance of contention among its own advocates concerning it; some of whom have insisted on the necessity of grace and satisfaction in exclusion of a retribution; and others have with less ceremony maintained the latter in opposition to both the former; thus representing either the doctrines of Redemption or the hopes of nature as groundless imaginations: while a third sort have heightened the contradiction by awkward attempts to reconcile them, alternately asserting and denying both, and putting up and pulling down with each hand by turns. Deists must have more than doubly triumphed then, when Divines were not only thus divided against one another, but the same persons in the same breath against themselves, and the scripture could not but be manifoldly injured by such inconsistency and prevarication. A proper reconciliation therefore of the fundamental points that are seemingly at such essential variance, so as to unite the
positive

positive and circumstantial evidence of a future state (and thereby all reasonable persons of whatever party or persuasion) must needs be a very acceptable service to every real friend of natural and revealed Religion. The utility of the thing cannot be questioned, the only doubt is as to the possibility of its performance; of which there may justly remain some apprehension in the mind of the reader, after such variety of attempts have failed concerning it. The plot has certainly been worked up to a sufficient height, and the difficulty is on all sides apparent, the danger is how the developement will answer. Let not the reader despair however, the solution of the greatest mysteries is sometimes accomplished by the simplest methods, after the most extraordinary means have failed; and unaccountable as it may seem after what has passed how such doctrines can be reconciled, yet I dare say it will appear in a short time as surprizing, how they could have so long remained in opposition to each other.

BOOK II.

B O O K II.

NEW HYPOTHESIS, FOR BETTER
RECONCILIATION OF REVELATION
WITH REASON.

CHAPTER I.

On original Judgment and the manifold Grace
of our Deliverance from it.

THE Foundation of all the foregoing perplexity has consisted in the presumption that this mortal state is merely the effect of Adam's fall, and not any way connected by nature with a Redemption. Men usually consider whatever ensued upon his transgression as an immediate execution of the penalty ordained, and the Redemption as altogether a distinct and distant circumstance; toward which there was nothing done before the death of Christ, and which was co-temporary only with the means of its accomplishment.

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In this supposition there is much more error than I choose at present to encounter; therefore to begin with the most reprehensible and obvious I observe, that tho' the sacrifice of Christ (whereby alone Redemption could be procured, was not fulfilled till many ages after man had incurred the fate ordained; yet the dispensation itself was from the beginning. St. John speaks of the Lamb as slain from the foundation of the world, i. e. in the fixed purpose and design of God, who foresaw what would ensue in Adam, and had accordingly provided the means of our salvation in Christ, long before the event that required the remedy subsisted. St. Peter also mentioning our redemption by the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without spot or blemish adds, who verily was pre-ordained before the foundation of the world, but manifest in these last times. I forbear to exhibit any more proofs of this point, the misfortune having not consisted in the want of its being received but duly digested and applied, which I now proceed to the performance of.

Our

Our deliverance then not being at all unsettled, but fully resolved upon before the world began ; it is easy to imagine, that the Divine Being acted according to this original council and determination ; and the supposition that we should otherwise been born to this mortal state, but afterward been consigned to perish in the grave is by no means essential. On the other hand, since it appears that the present scene (when once ordained) requires another to succeed it ; it is much more reasonable to conclude, that if God had not been disposed to vouchsafe our ransom, he never would have permitted this short-lived state at all, than that he would have suffered it in the first place to exist, and afterward have denied the proper consequence. Instead then of considering the present life as meerly the effect of Adam's fall, I should rather esteem it a part and appurtenance of Redemption likewise ; since another estate appears the necessary consequence of this when once allowed, but it certainly was in the Creator's option before the commence-

ment of it (when our salvation was determined) whether he would establish such an exigency for a future being by tolerating the condition of the present.

This general reasoning is highly favoured by the original law in particular, whereby the fate of man was without Redemption to have been finally decided; which has been so often quoted that it may seem tautology to recite its saying to Adam concerning the tree of knowledge, the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die; the actual accomplishment of which (as the transgression happened before any issue born) must have equally precluded all his posterity from this life and the next. It is well known however, that the letter has in conformity with the contrary event been interpreted in a quite different manner, as if it signified not thou shalt die immediately, but only become liable to death, or mortal from that very instant; and I cannot but produce on this occasion another
very

very extraordinary instance of the ingenuity and pains men have been at to support this interpretation. " The words
 " in our version (says Mr. Stackhouse)
 " seem to imply that on the day that
 " Adam should eat of the tree of know-
 " ledge he should die, which eventually
 " proved not so because he lived many
 " years after that; and therefore some
 " have well observed it should be render-
 " ed thou shalt deserve to die without
 " remission; for the scripture frequently
 " expresses by the future not only that
 " which will but also that which ought
 " to come to pass, to which there
 " is a very apposite text 1st Kings,
 " 2. 37, where Solomon says to Shimei;
 " go not forth from thence, (viz. from
 " Jerusalem) for in the day thou goest
 " out and passest over the brook Kidron
 " thou shalt surely die, i. e. thou shalt
 " deserve to die without remission; for
 " Solomon reserved the power of punish-
 " ing him when he should think fit, and
 " in effect he did not put him to death
 " the

“ the same day he transgressed, any more
 “ than God did put Adam to death the
 “ same day that he disobeyed in eating
 “ the forbidden fruit. This seems to be
 “ a good solution (adds he) tho’ some
 “ interpreters understand the prohibition
 “ as if God intended thereby to denote
 “ to Adam the deadly quality of the
 “ forbidden fruit, whose poison was so
 “ exquisite that on the very day he eat
 “ thereof it would certainly have destroyed
 “ him, had not God’s goodness interposed
 “ and restrained its violence.” [Stack-
 house’s History of the Bible, vol. 1.
 page 64.]

With all due deference to the com-
 mentators I beg leave to observe, that the
 last opinion seems to come nearest to
 the truth, and that there was no occasion
 for the other ingenious subterfuge; but
 it would have answered a much better
 purpose, had they strictly adhered to the
 obvious meaning that Adam should be
 destroyed immediately on his transgression,
 and

and attributed the deviation from this in the event to the Redemption obtained by Jesus Christ. That the original law had been antecedently ordained to be superseded through him, and that the dispensation was announced when God arrived to judge man for his offence are by no means new assertions ; but points acceded to by all who pay any regard to the doctrine of a Redemption. Men differ concerning the fate which the species would have sustained without it ; but that they have obtained some deliverance from the original decree by Christ, and that a reversal of it in their behalf had been before determined, and was at this very time announced, is what I shall not suppose at present to be doubted. How absurd then in such case, to strain the meaning of words in order to reconcile the penalty of the law with the event that followed its infringement? This cannot be any way essential, but on the other hand may be highly detrimental, by confounding original condemnation with a matter that the Redemption

tion has a concern in ; and will actually be found the occasion of all the difficulty on the present subject. Men have indefatigably laboured to wrest the law to an agreement with the consequences of its transgression, lest the Divine veracity should suffer by the want of a strict conformity in execution with the decree, forgetting that a dispensation from it had been previously resolved upon in consideration of ample amends to be afterwards made for this by Christ. Hereby has the cause of Redemption been most miserably entangled and perplexed ; Divines insisting on the performance of strict judgment where the doctrines of grace and satisfaction should have been applied, and then again obtruding these where there was no kind of room for them, or possibility of receiving them. The instant wherein they should have been urged was overlooked, in which case it is no wonder they appeared so unaccountable and aukward afterward ; if men are determined on maintaining rigid execution where mercy was vouchsafed, can it be
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any way astonishing that where they would find occasion for grace and deliverance, they are necessarily obliged to seek for it in vain?

Instead of interpreting the law by the event that followed upon transgression, they should have interpreted the event by the dispensation that attended it; but the great objection to this was the consideration of death being at last inflicted which made them look on the time of its accomplishment as immaterial, and the law as in effect fulfilled, while the thing itself denounced was in reality and substance executed. I promise however to demonstrate this in the sequel to be entirely a false apprehension of the matter, and that however similar the present death may be in form and sound to that originally ordained, yet nothing can be more widely different in tendency and design; yea that it is as directly opposite thereto in this respect as light can be to darkness. The destiny which our first

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parents

parents had to dread from their transgression was proscription from everlasting life and happiness, whereas the death which we are now adjudged to undergo is not for the purpose of our removal from, but that of our renewal to them. In short, the race could not have been restored in righteousness without it; for as there was a necessity for prolonging the life of their first parents after the fall for the propagation of a species, (which otherwise must have been buried in perdition with them) so was there an equal exigency for the mortality of mankind after the corruption of their nature, that sin might not for ever have dominion over them. As without a reprieve of Adam his posterity could not have been born, so without a dissolution of their present nature they could not have been recovered from the effect of his transgression; death was therefore equally expedient with an immediate respite and future resurrection, and purely ordained in mercy and forgiveness with them.

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The full illustration of this, which strikes at the root of the contrary interpretation, must be reserved for the sequel; in the mean while I assume the liberty of asserting that the dispensation from instant death to Adam was altogether as much (tho' not so important) a departure from the law, as the promise of a release from absolute destruction. It is certain that when God arrived to judge man for his transgression, the latter had no more reason to imagine he should live after it a day than he had to conclude he should be raised again from death, till he heard the decree that passed. His situation was like that of a criminal tottering on the brink of the Tarpeian rock, without any more hope of respite than recovery from the dire effect of precipitation; the one was altogether as much beyond possibility of expectation to Adam as the other, and I choose to ascribe them both to the bounty of our Redemption as well because they both are equally deviations from the law, as that

it will be extremely hard to give any tolerable solution of this life without supposing it ordained in order to a foundation for a better. Reason very strongly urges that the former could properly be designed only for the latter, nor does Revelation less emphatically assert the same when it represents, that the moment this life was established another was by inviolable covenant entailed upon it. When then the present state lay equally beyond reach of expectation from the law with a resurrection, and is likewise so essentially connected both by nature and promise with it, what more apparent than that it was equally a measure appertaining to Redemption, and a step toward the promotion of this? What God hath thus manifoldly joined together let no man ever presume to put asunder.

This should have been the conclusion notwithstanding death, and I cannot but think that Philosophers have made a much better use of reason than Divines of Revelation

Revelation in this particular; the former of whom have commonly from the meer light of nature determined the present life a probation for a better, whatever dissolution the human being may sensibly appear to undergo; whereas the latter have been so misguided by a cloud of original condemnation that they have totally mistaken the intention of this mortal state, tho' they had many more considerations to enlighten them than the Philosophers with regard to it. For in the first place the institution of the present life with the apparatus of so many extraordinary circumstances as attended it to Adam was evidently eccentric, after so singular a denunciation that on the day he eat of the forbidden fruit he should surely die. Who instead of its immediate execution could have antecedently imagined any thing like such a long train of appointments as succeeded? viz. increase of issue as well as sorrow in travail and subjection to the woman; barrenness of soil with toil and trouble
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in general to the man, &c? These have always appeared to me far-fetched, and foreign to what might have been expected from the law, notwithstanding the event of death that followed; nor could I ever conceive how that which seemed to pronounce personal perdition only to those who should offend against it could be construed to imply so many extraordinary pains and penalties (as the consequences above-mentioned were supposed to be) to millions who had no concern in its transgression. In the same light I make no doubt it has appeared to others, till their natural sense was overborn by the necessity they apprehended of interpreting the law by the event, and by the systematical interpretations that were founded on this. Thus much at least I ever thought before I had any notion of the use I now intend to make of the temporary reprieve to Adam, and much more before I had any idea of all the other circumstances ordained with it being necessary provisions meerly for the good of this life and qualifications of it for a better, which
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is the true consideration of them. But omitting this which may not be so obvious at present, it is sufficiently surprising, that Divines should not conceive the design of the present state in general, when besides the apparent exigency of another from it (the light of which they had in common with the philosophers) they had also its obvious eccentricity from original condemnation coupled with a positive promise of a renovation at the very instant of its institution. This was, as I may say, the express original charter of its foundation; so far is Revelation from discountenancing the just hopes of nature, that the first dawn thereof which ever was afforded is the strongest support and confirmation of them.

In order then to conclude what would have been the fate of man from violation of the first decree, let us not be guided by what was apparently foreign to it, expressly attended with a dispensation from it, and in all probability done entirely on this account; but by what the oracle of
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the law whereby he was to be judged declared concerning him. This should be interpreted by nothing but itself and what originally to be expected from it, whence it will appear more positive for his immediate than final death; one of which it denounces in the strongest terms, but leaves the other to be understood, which last however was never questioned by any who had the least faith of a Redemption. And tho' it would be ridiculous to insist upon the first in so strict a sense as that man could not subsist a day after his transgression; yet I think it requisite to conclude, that his destruction would certainly have been before any event succeeded that might entail the exigency of a renovation. Accordingly our first parents having fallen before any offspring born that might inherit their corruption, and involve all the consequences of this mixed state, (which would have been highly improper to be suffered without a further dispensation) no such issue would have ever been permitted. There would have been no suspension of the

the law for posterity to succeed to an improper fate, or sustain any actual evil in conjunction with their guilty parents; on the contrary, these having sinned while there were none besides themselves in being would have perished before any offspring proceeded from them; whereby all mankind would have been destroyed in their original and human nature have had a final period in a short time after its first formation.

It is said indeed in the New Testament that in Adam all die, in Christ all shall be made alive; which seems to ascribe this short-lived state exclusively to our first parents, and the Resurrection only to our Saviour. The necessary implication however of the passage is not that our present condition ever would have been without a Redemption likewise, but only that the fall was the first circumstance that occasioned it, or that mortality is the effect we now sustain thereby and should not have undergone without it. On the other hand the

Y Resurrection

Resurrection stands particularly attributed to Redemption, not because it is the only thing belonging to it, but the great end and blessing of it; in short the consummation of our deliverance is here put for the whole of it, to which this mortal state is only a subordinate mean or instrument; not worthy to be mentioned in comparison with the Resurrection as any part of our Redemption, but like a spot upon the sun overlooked and left out of the consideration of it.

I shall therefore abide by the foregoing conclusion as to what would have been in pursuance of the fall without deliverance, tho' Bishop Butler strongly condemns the question and says, " That it cannot be
 " answered without going upon that infi-
 " nitely absurd supposition that we know
 " the whole of the case. And perhaps the
 " very enquiry what God would have
 " done had he not acted as he has, may
 " have it in some very great impropriety;
 " and ought not to be carried on any fur-
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“ther than is necessary to help our partial
 “and inadequate conceptions of things.
 [Butler’s Analogy, page 297.]

Our partial and inadequate are in this
 case our erroneous and false conceptions of
 things; and so far as the latter are neces-
 sary to be corrected it is not only justifi-
 able but highly commendable to pursue the
 question. These are the only improprieties
 that attend it, or obstacles to a clear conclu-
 sion; as will appear from the particular
 difficulty assigned by his lordship as a rea-
 son why he thought not fit to enter into the
 enquiry, which (he says) he fears has been
 determined rashly, and perhaps with equal
 rashness contrary ways. The difficulty
 was, if Christ had not come into the world
 what would have been the future condition
 of the better sort of men, those just per-
 sons dispersed over the face of the earth
 for whom Manasses in his prayer asserts,
 that repentance was not appointed? I an-
 swer that they would never have at all
 existed, consequently could not have been
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ordained to eternal life or death of any sort after the present state; the apparent necessity of which occasioned the perplexity of the question, as it must have been determined one or other of these ways according to any prior supposition of the fall. The determination therefore must in either case have not only been rash but false, which shews indeed the utter impossibility of obtaining satisfaction on the subject as the matter stood, and the necessity of a better system; but not any absurdity as to the question of original condemnation in itself.

For certainly it does not follow that we cannot know any thing unless we know every thing of Redemption, or the whole of it as compleatly as its author does; this was the very principle of Des Cartes against final causes, who would have buried all enquiry concerning the ends of the Supreme Being with respect to the works of nature in his infinite abyss of wisdom, as being equally impenetrable

impenetrable to us in every thing. This shews not only how the same servile sentiments that have been so much condemned among Philosophers still continue among the most enlightened of Divines, but also how it is the same cause of error that occasions them by the difficulty it involves men in. This first entangles them in perplexity, and then damps the spirit of enquiry; I am convinced that no other consideration could have induced a person of his lordship's liberality and enlarged understanding to embrace so narrow and circumscribed a mode of thinking. For certainly if we may presume to know any thing of Redemption, it should be that which we have been delivered from; hæremus in limine primo when in publishing a great and wonderful deliverance to mankind we are unable to say what it consisted in, or would have become of them if it had not been. Could it be imagined, if it were not so notorious a fact, that the christian world should labour under so fundamental a defect? Yea that

that one of the most eminent among Divines should reprobate the question as infinitely absurd and improper to be asked? Or is it any way astonishing after this, that in an age of enquiry such multitudes should look upon the so much boasted deliverance as none at all?

Undoubtedly there is not any thing more proper than this, if possible to be known by us; to which let me add, that supposing it ever so immaterial in itself to ascertain the precise idea of original condemnation, yet it becomes absolutely essential where false and injurious notions have been propagated of it. These leave it not a matter of curiosity or indifference, but render it a point of the utmost concern and consequence to investigate the truth; for if this be not found error will prevail, at least lie lurking in the mind and be productive of inevitable confusion to it, as is evident from the example of his lordship.

Nor

Nor was I willing to incur the censure of pulling down without putting up; and when bad ideas had been propagated of the original decree, it seemed not to me sufficient to reject them without substituting a better apprehension in the place of them. Nothing but a direct discovery of truth is an effectual remedy of falshood, and the necessity I had been under of repeatedly declaring what would *not* have been the fate of mankind in their first parent appeared manifoldly to require of me an explanation of what *would*; the neglect of which, as I observed before, has been destructive of all idea of Redemption.

I have thought proper to enter occasionally into this vindication of my conduct, since if so contracted an observation could fall from so great a man as Bishop Butler, what censure may I not expect from narrow-minded Divines in general? From men who are too fastidious to receive any thing that is original, but look
upon

upon every attempt toward such improvement as arrogance and presumption? For there is not a more prevailing practice than superciliously to condemn any proposal of this kind as vanity and conceit at least, or a neglect of things more needful to be minded; tho' there is not any thing more necessary than a new system from the false notions of those very contemptuous persons who are so ready to revile it, or more agreeable than the present to the most orthodox conclusions on the same subject.

For whence was it inferred that man would have been immortal if he had not sinned against the forbidden fruit, or have perished everlastingly upon this without Redemption? Was it not from what the scripture says of his dying in pursuance of the former, and being rescued from perdition thro' the latter? If then these are proper conclusions, there is no just objection against presuming in general what would have ensued if that had not been which was, or God had not acted as he did.

Nor

Nor can there be any better argument against inferring what would have been the mode of perdition in particular, viz. that man would have no more lived upon the fall than died without it, or been restored to eternal life without Redemption; when there is equal room and occasion for the conclusion both from the letter of the law and reason of the thing.

But this is not all, the present inference is not only supported by the same sort of deduction as the most unquestionable doctrines of the faith, but is also positively enforced by many passages in the New Testament; which is more than I imagined in the beginning, and must I think at least exempt me from the common censure of being wise above what is written. Of these I shall produce one at present, and more in the sequel.—For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that if Christ died for all, then all had died; and that he died for all that they who live might not henceforth live unto themselves,

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but unto him who died for them and rose again. [2 Cor. 5 chap. 14, 15 verse.]

This signifies in the first place, I presume, that if Christ died for all the proper conclusion is, that unless he had acted thus then all had died, *απα πάντες ἀπεθάνον* i. e. had perished; for they must have died to a very different effect and purpose from what they do at present, otherwise his sacrifice could have done no service to them. Thus much will not be questioned by any believers of Redemption, nor is it less apparent that men would have perished (in the manner before-mentioned) by extinction in their original than that they would have sustained perdition final, if we consider the next words which assign the reason of Christ's death; viz. that they who live might not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him who died for them, &c.

They who live are the same I conceive as those who would have died, viz. all who ever enter into the present state; which is
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as plainly put in opposition to what would have been their fate as the death of Christ is in the beginning of this passage. It is not less clearly signified that all men live in this world by virtue of his sacrifice than that without it they would have for ever perished; for the conclusion makes the present life the gift of their Redemption, considers it as what would have been lost but now is saved, and argues accordingly from this circumstance as a peculiar obligation on them not to devote it to themselves, but to him who died to procure it for them; whose property it therefore is by this extraordinary acquisition of it. Every faculty and privilege of the being that we now possess, is not in any place more plainly said to belong to God as its Creator than it is here ascribed to Christ as its Redeemer; and it is no more to be doubted that without his ransom mankind would not have been after the fall than that without creation they would not have been before. The commentators would not have failed of this construction had the passage occurred

red in any other writing than the scripture; nor indeed would they in this, if it were not for the forced interpretations they have been accustomed to in pursuance of wrong systems. The same means that have obscured the prospect of the original decree have darkened the plain meaning of this and various other texts of scripture; which tho' they have never been interpreted in this manner, can never be explained so suitably to themselves as by it. Such are the places in which Christ is said to be the Saviour of the world, and the occasion of the free gift coming upon all men to justification of life with many more passages of the like nature, which have not hitherto been expounded of their being born to the present establishment thro' his acquittal and deliverance of them from original perdition, but yet are only explicable by it; as will most obviously appear when we come to consider its peculiar appositeness to them, with the absurdity of every other interpretation that has been put upon them. At present I shall satisfy myself with a distinct

tinct examination of the foregoing passage to the Corinthians, and hasten to the use and application of the principle whereby it is illustrated; the advantage of which in reason would be abundantly sufficient to recommend it, if there were no support whatever to be derived for it from Revelation.

The detriment of the contrary apprehension has been sufficiently apparent, for the judgment mankind were supposed obnoxious to not being agreeable in its most moderate sense to reason, it was impossible to make them sensible of the extraordinary grace of a Redemption, much more of the necessity of such vast atonement for it. They were abundantly more ready to murmur and revolt at the idea of the original decree than to think themselves favourably dealt with by a deliverance from it; it seemed as if the Deity had ordained an unjustifiable sentence in the first place, and then magnified the removal of it as a superlative act of
grace.

grace, for which there was the utmost exigency in the nature of things; besides insisting on an exorbitant satisfaction for what was every way a matter of the most necessary obligation. Neither the justice and mercy, nor mercy and atonement of the measure could be reconciled together, so that the whole fabrick of Redemption seemed a very incoherent work throughout; an absurd foundation laid with an absurder superstructure raised upon it, and all that Divines could say with any tolerable propriety upon the subject was, that it was a mystery beyond human comprehension; whenever they attempted a rational solution of its doctrines, they could neither give any satisfaction to their opponents nor probably derive much from what they advanced themselves. All this perplexity I purpose to remove by the foregoing alteration, which I trust will shew the mystery to have been wholly founded on misapprehension; nor do I mean to content myself with supposing the particulars above-mentioned reconcilable with reason, but

hope

hope to demonstrate and deduce them from it. It was a saying of Archimedes that, were he granted a place to fix his machinery upon, he could move the earth from its position; and the misfortune is that the very advantage which Archimedes wanted for his machines has been given by Divines to infidels against Revelation; viz. the previous supposition of the present life to work upon, whereby they have been enabled to enforce the necessity of another, and shake the system of Redemption to its foundation. If believers are determined upon granting what should be denied, it is no wonder that they are afterward obliged very ungraciously to deny what they should grant; but when infidels are deprived of this important ground, they may easily be dispossessed of every other strong hold at once. The justice of the original decree and extraordinary grace of our deliverance from it, both on account of the sin of Adam and our own, with the necessity of Christ's satisfaction (which are the four great articles of Redemption) will be

as evident from reason as they are from scripture; nor will even the last require so much as a text to prove it, which of late all the authorities that could be desired from Revelation have been scarce sufficient to support.

But this is too extraordinary an assertion to obtain any credit for at present; to proceed then in the first place with the propriety and rectitude of the original decree, let us not in considering this be misguided by what became incumbent on the Divine Being after the scheme of a Redemption had been begun and promised, but let us reflect on what might have been done before any such obligation was entered into. In the very institution of this life we maintain that the corner stone of a deliverance was laid, as well as charter of it granted in the assurance that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; and the supreme Architect is not a person to begin a work and not go on with it, much less to enter into an express covenant for its completion

pletion and break thro' the engagement. Undoubtedly there was afterward a very sufficient obligation on him both in nature and by promise to proceed, but this is not the proper consideration now; our business is to enquire what might have been done before any such foundation laid or contract made; in short, if God had been disposed to consign our first parents on their transgression to immediate death without remedy or relief, what objection possibly could have been urged to this?

Life was not their original property, but the free gift of the Creator to them, who certainly had a right to subject his own donation to any conditions whatsoever that over-balanced not the value of its possession. Now the privilege of immortal happiness conferred upon them was immensely great, and the observance of one prohibition only in memorial and acknowledgment of their obligations for it could be no hard command; so that they had not only forfeited their sole title to existence, but

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been also guilty of the vilest ingratitude to a most bountiful benefactor.

Nothing can be more apparent than the justice of executing the law with respect to our first parents, by immediately withdrawing that extraordinary gift they had rendered themselves so unworthy of enjoying. The inconsiderableness of the restraint they broke through, from whence some would falsely infer that of their sin, is what greatly heightens and aggravates its heinousness; for instead of contending against God for ordaining the forfeiture of what he gave them for such a seeming trifle of offence, the proper argument is certainly against our first parents for not fulfilling such a real trifle of obedience, where there had been such magnificence of favour; instead of diminishing, this greatly heightens their obnoxiousness to that condemnation we have described.

Nor is the justice of executing this decree more evident in relation to our first
parents

parents than their posterity, however free the latter may be from the particular guilt of its violation. For God was no more obliged to preserve the former for the sake of issue (after they had broken the fundamental condition of their existence) than he was to create them for this purpose in the first place; life was no more an original property of their posterity than themselves, the only title that could be urged to it was what the Divine covenant conferred; and since this was entirely forfeited, the continuance of the whole species now was altogether as much a matter of bounty and discretion as the formation of it ever was in the beginning.

But this is not all, there was not only no just objection against the execution of the original law on account of mankind at large, but what may seem strange at first, an extraordinary occasion for it on this very consideration. For however they were free from the personal guilt, they were deeply involved in the con-

tagious consequence of its transgression; of this all nature plentifully partook, and so far were mankind from any better title to existence after the fall than before the creation of the world, that if we consider the disparity occasioned by this catastrophe in the human species, and how sadly it was now depraved from innocence, we shall find every reason to conclude the contrary. It is commonly conceived, and I trust will properly be demonstrated that man was originally formed a far different creature from what he is; his understanding being endued with a sufficient light to discern all the ends of nature, and his will as suitably disposed to pursue the dictates of it. On the incident however mentioned this similitude of the divine perfection became greatly damaged and defaced; his intellects were grossly darkened, and his passions no longer remained obedient to the direction of that glimmering light which still survived to guide them. In short all that imperfection, folly and perverseness that we now so bitterly

bitterly complain of in the human race was totally derived from the violation of the forbidden fruit: our first parents had not only committed transgression of that which was made the test of their obedience, but also broken down the barrier on which depended the security of their general innocence; their nature was become strongly vitiated throughout, and a wide passage made for sin to rush in a flood and torrent into the world. The consideration of beings then that were so far gone from the power of original righteousness and the perfect constitution of their Maker must needs have been highly offensive to his purity, and he could not but have been particularly displeased at the idea of a race that was to inherit so rebellious a disposition of nature. Indeed such is now the lamentable aversion of mankind from good and propensity to perverseness, that even a wise man who only views them in their present state without any retrospect to a better establishment cannot but be
moved

moved with indignation and disgust at the unaccountable blindness and contradiction of their ways. And if such must be the disposition of an imperfect creature of tolerable discernment into the proper paths and true design of nature, how much more obnoxious must the sight of such corruption have been to a Being of Supreme Perfection, that is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity and was conscious of having adapted his work to the full attainment of every end and obligation? Whoever duly considers this, instead of murmuring that man was not allowed to be immortal afterward, will rather be inclined to wonder that he was suffered to subsist at all; that the fountain of every pure and perfect gift should condescend to bear with such depravity as cannot but make a person of even human integrity and discretion frown.

I must here request the reader to stay some time and reflect awhile on the different

rent aspect that the doctrine of our obnoxiousness to condemnation through the corruption of nature (as well as the transgression of Adam) bears from what it does in the light that it is usually represented in. As the argument from original sin is commonly managed to this purpose, it pleads abundantly for the species, instead of making in the least against them; for when we previously suppose the establishment of a race with a deep depravity of nature entailed upon them, this instead of a reason for indignation or displeasure, is the most powerful consideration that can be urged for mercy and condescension to them. Can we presume the Almighty capable of ordaining or permitting the propagation of creatures, and thereupon imputing a disease that inseparably attend their constitution as a matter of wrath and condemnation to them? surely this must not be attributed to him whose ways are just and holy, wise and good; nor can it be credited of such a Ruler that he would endure so plentiful a
source

source of evil as the human constitution for his own sake, but in order to the production of a better end. For not to say any thing of the necessity of accepting our sincere however imperfect obedience in such case, on account of the unavoidable deficiency of our nature; this is also a very powerful consideration in our favour, viz. that depravity could not be grateful to a Being of Supreme Perfection in itself. The next question is then, for what other end it can be presumed to have been ordained or tolerated? For the production of a worse consequence?

This indeed is what the Calvinistical scheme suggests, which represents it as a ground for our condemnation by birth to everlasting torment, and thus makes a truly Manichæan doctrine of its permission. To which let me add that the Arminian account, which renders it an argument for our extinction after this life, admits of no better reason for its toleration than the satisfaction of the thing

thing itself. Such must at this rate have been its final cause by nature, than which nothing but the foregoing can redound more to the dishonour of the Creator.

The necessity of some better end than of our present being than itself pleads irresistibly for acceptance after its permission, and nothing could be more disgusting than the pretended obligation of compleat obedience in it, on the account of God as well as man. Bishop Sherlock himself says he is persuaded, “ that the not
 “ making of this distinction between the
 “ original hopes of nature and the hopes
 “ which may be derived from the present
 “ state of the world, has been a great prejudice in many minds as well against
 “ revealed Religion as against those who
 “ defend it. Divines are thought to have
 “ no sense or no bowels, when they call in
 “ question the foundation of those hopes
 “ which natural reason conceives from a
 “ view of the perfections of God and the
 “ imperfections of man. Revelation is
 B b “ looked

“ looked upon as an imposition and abridg-
“ ment of our natural right, when it of-
“ fers that mercy upon terms and condi-
“ tions to which nature seems to lay so
“ just a claim upon her own account.”
[Appendix to the dissertation on the Fall,
annexed to the discourses on Prophecy.]

I am happy to find so respectable an au-
thority for the necessity of this distinction,
and the great detriment that has accrued
to the gospel from the want of it. I can
by no means however coincide in opinion
with his lordship that the censure men-
tioned is not merited by Divines; or as
he adds in the next paragraph, that they
who defend the gospel do not pretend to
say, that man in his present condition is not
an object of mercy; for they are highly
guilty of it, nor is his lordship entirely
free from deserving the imputation he so
much complains of. In his discourses
upon prophecy indeed he proceeds upon
the present plan, but in his other sermons
he pursues the ordinary method; as we
have

have shewn by a quotation in the preceeding chapter wherein he says, that it cannot be proved from the mercies and goodness of God that he will forgive sinners; if it could, there can be no such thing as Natural Religion, from which the contrary is demonstrable, &c. I might produce many other passages from his works to the same purpose, if it were necessary; but that from his appendix is the only one wherein I have seen the proper distinction fully enlarged upon, and is an illustrious instance of exception to the error of Divines in general; from whose imagination there is nothing farther, than that this life is any other than a condition of wrath and original condemnation. The unpardonableness of sin without distinction, and inefficacy of repentance (notwithstanding all the imperfections we are born under) to procure forgiveness are the constant topics of Redemption; as if the favour of God, whenever he was once offended in the lightest manner, were even now by nature finally and for ever forfeit-

ed. It was on this account that I gave in a foregoing chapter, so much of the doctrine of Divines in their own words, since it might otherwise have seemed impossible to persons unacquainted with their manner of proceeding that they should be guilty of such argument and equivocation. It would have appeared scarce credible without the most express authorities to men not particularly accustomed to the subject, that there were any such pretences or evasions to encounter, and that I had not been contending entirely with shadows of my raising. For this purpose I must beg leave to produce one passage more from Mr. Seed, who says; "Some late authors have been *hardy* enough to assert the efficacy of meer repentance, that men by a thorough reformation cease to be personally displeasing; but what is this reformation which removes whatever is displeasing? Why an absolutely perfect repentance, which can have no place in such imperfect beings as we are. It is a meer notion, not a reality

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" ty. Is our repentance a return to an en-
 " tire, *uninterrupted* obedience, without
 " *any alloy or tincture* of vice? Or is it
 " only such an obedience as is attended
 " with several relapses; but by which
 " by degrees and in the main, we gain
 " ground over our vices; and tho' far, very
 " far from being perfect, yet are in a pro-
 " gressive state toward perfection."

This is the same argument repeated
 against the efficacy of repentance, as is
 usually urged against that of obedience;
 indeed there can be no foundation for
 requiring perfection in the one, without
 a supposed necessity for it in the other;
 for the repentance of great sinners cannot
 be more compleat than the obedience of
 those just persons who need no repentance;
 and on the contrary, whatever occasion
 there is for dispensing with absolute per-
 fection of obedience, there must be for
 dispensing with that of repentance like-
 wise; since the former would be a dead
 letter (of no consequence or service)
 without

without the latter. I shall therefore say nothing further on the fact or absurdity of contending in either case for the necessity of what must be a meer notion, not a reality; and can have no place in such imperfect beings as we are.

Men may be heard with patience when they confine themselves within any tolerable bounds, as by asserting that a Revelation is highly needful to determine the proper and full extent of forgiveness; how far and in whom repentance would be admitted; whether for ordinary offences only, or for great, presumptuous and malignant crimes, especially after they have been long persisted in? Reason might have been at a loss to draw the line and perhaps insufficient to assure men of such absolute and plenary remission of all sins whatever as the gospel has pronounced them capable in this life of obtaining. I confess I have often thought that so full a pardon of all transgressions (however numerous, heinous, or inveterate) and assurance

rance that the measure of iniquity never
 could be so filled up in this life but it may
 be undone by repentance till the door
 of grace is absolutely shut by death,
 might possibly be dangerous. And still
 I think that free-thinkers have gone too
 far in maintaining that the gospel has not
 added to the certainty or largeness of for-
 giveness, but that both these were as
 clearly determinable before by reason as
 they are at present. Neither the securi-
 ty of pardon nor a future recompense
 could possibly be so great before Revela-
 tion as it has been since; but this appears
 to me a very venial error of free-think-
 ers in comparison with the opposite ex-
 treme, and most unmerciful rigour of
 Divines in asserting, that any failure of
 perfection as to obedience or repentance
 in this unavoidably sinful state, is sufficient
 to preclude the best of men from any
 well-grounded hope of acceptance. Such
 apprehension could proceed from nothing
 but the grossest misapplication of the grace
 of our Redemption; and I dare say the
 Heathens

Heathens never dreamt of it, whatever may be urged from the prevailing use of sacrifice, for propitiation of sin among them; nor is there any doubt to be entertained at present (whatever there may have been before the gospel) that the full extent of forgiveness as it is now published by this, is the only rule of acceptance which could be made consistently with any security of obedience. This is so fully illustrated by Bishop Hoadly in his terms of acceptance, that I cannot do more justice to the argument than by giving it in his own words.

He says ser. 4, sec. 3, page 80, "Let us suppose that God Almighty declares he is willing to pardon a sinner just to such a particular term of life, or such a particular number of sins; but if after that he shall sin wilfully, he shall be absolutely unpardonable. This looks like a great discouragement to sin, but yet in the end inevitably leads to it. For what would be the issue, if any one after his
final

final pardon should through the violence of a temptation be ensnared into a wilful sin? What would he think within himself, when he was once sure that he was in a desperate condition? Would he not certainly find a sort of present refuge in being more resolute than ever in his wicked courses, since he could hope for no good in breaking them off? Considering therefore the present frailty and weakness of man, this would be a vast disadvantage in the end to the cause of holiness and virtue. For the promising of pardon to such a particular number of transgressions, or to a course of sin of such a particular duration, would almost fatally influence men who were not of a sort of angelic nature, to venture so far in some instance or other without fear or suspicion of danger; and all that time the cause of vice would be wholly unrestrained. And then their own weakness and the strength of their evil habits would without all doubt in some case or other carry them so much farther, that they must come to an hope-

less state; and the despair of future mercy must make them violent and resolved in their wickedness. Thus we see that this supposition which seems to take most care of the cause of virtue leaves it not only in a naked and unguarded but in a very desperate condition.

“Yea let us suppose that it was declared in general, that there was a certain number of sins, or period of time beyond which God would not pardon; and not any particular number or time specified to the world; yet still it is too justly to be feared that most men would first be led by hope to commit many sins with a flattering persuasion that they should not come up to that number or arrive at that period; and then when the habit was become strong would be fixed by despair in this opinion, that having probably gotten beyond that number and period, they may as well continue in their sins, as their inclination powerfully directs them.

“Thus

“ Thus it appears that we ourselves can discover great and considerable inconveniences in any other terms of Reconciliation between God and man, except those of the Gospel; viz. that the sinner shall be pardoned who doth at any time so forsake his sins, as to bring forth in the course and tenor of his life the contrary virtues, and sincerely perform the whole will of God. In which proposal you may see, that when it is said that all wilful sinners amending their lives shall be accepted, there is all the encouragement possible given to the practice of virtue, without making its cause desperate, even to those who have very much neglected it for the time past: and when it is said that no wilful sinners without such actual amendment shall be accepted, there is all the discouragement given to vice that can be, without throwing the sinner into such a desperate condition, as to tempt him to have recourse to his very sins for comfort.

“ I am sensible there is this inconvenience attending the promulgation of pardon even upon these terms ; that men of evil dispositions and strong propensities to sin are led from hence to the basest return to so much mercy ; to imagine because all wilful sinners are pardonable upon these conditions, therefore all is well if one time or other they come up to them ; and with the possibility of this, rather encourage themselves to go on for the present in the commission of sin, than immediately to forsake it.

“ But nothing of this nature can be framed, but what men may so abuse, and if our gospel be ineffectual on this account, it is so only to those who are lost to all sense of virtue or common gratitude ; to men of such tempers as appear resolved to sin, whatever terms of acceptance could have been offered them. Notwithstanding therefore this inconveniency may attend this peculiar method of acceptance ; yet since it is excellently fitted for the happiness

ness of all who are truly honest and sincere ; since much greater inconveniencies would attend all other methods that can be thought of, and it is plain that this ariseth from an invincible perversity of mind ; this is sufficient to justify the excellent contrivance of this method above all others. For infinite wisdom itself can do no more than choose that which is the best of all methods possible, and hath the fewest inconveniencies attending it, and is most agreeable to the nature of God, the condition of man and the end proposed in it." [Thus far Bishop Hoadly.]

The foregoing was very far from being written with a view to the particular use I now intend to make of it, but is so apposite to this and so excellent in itself, that I thought I could not do better than appropriate it to my own purpose. It is a strong argument that there could be no other regulation for the present state of man than that which is established by Christianity ; in confirmation of which I
add,

add, that were it possible for a doubt of this to exist in reason, it must be precluded by Revelation. There is demonstration against any such apprehension from that very authority which is commonly set up in opposition to the necessary extent of forgiveness; since the rule of which has been determined by the gospel, there can be no question of its propriety in the nature of things. Whatever difficulty the Heathens may have been involved in about settling the due boundary of Remission in this world, there can be none to us christians; of whose faith it is a fundamental supposition that God would not on any account permit an improper relaxation of obedience, or grant a dispensation that was not requisite for the condition of our being in itself. Christ must otherwise be made the minister of sin instead of maintainer of righteousness, and the blood of the covenant wherewith we are sanctified an unholy thing; viz. by occasioning a law of licentiousness to be established for a standing charter of the creation

creation. But nothing could be more contrary to the design of his coming into the world, which was to secure obedience and destroy all the works of darkness as much as possible ; and this end was only to be accomplished by making such allowance as was necessary for the frail condition of our nature on the one hand, and denying all undue indulgence to the practice of sin on the other.

Here then I ask the question, is the doctrine of evangelical acceptance under all the imperfections of obedience and repentance incident to mankind, a proper rule of discipline for them in itself, or is it not?—If it be, there can be no extraordinary grace in annexing it to the present state, nor was any satisfaction required to recommend it on the previous supposition of this ; the law being an obligation that was amply laid in the foundation of the thing itself.—On the contrary, if it be not a proper rule, &c. the matter is still worse, and it was farther from all
 grace

grace or goodness to establish it, nor could any atonement whatsoever recommend or reconcile it; christianity would in such case become no better than a Romish dispensation or indulgence. Such is the dire dilemma that Divines have manifestly exposed themselves to on this occasion; their own argument defeats its end and destroys the very cause that it is meant to serve, viz. by supposing that the satisfaction of our Saviour could be ordained to support obedience by establishing a rule that was not in every respect the wisest, best, and fittest for us on its own account. I know not whether free-thinkers have ever driven them to this extremity, but from a circumstance which I shall hereafter mention am inclined to think that the former have not pursued their advantage quite so far. Whether they have or not however it is certain that the orthodox are liable to be involved in this perplexity by their preposterous management of Redemption, the favour of which consisted not in annexing so large a dispensation

dispensation to our present nature, but in permitting such a nature as required it; which could not have been done without extraordinary grace, or justified without as extraordinary atonement, as we shall further shew in the sequel.

The truth is that christianity is in this respect almost as old as the creation, and evangelical acceptance altogether coeval with our present imperfection; whereof it was a fundamental law enacted at the beginning in the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, which promise could not but include every thing that was essential to its completion; and the expediency of the law should never have been questioned afterward even from the nature of things. Forgiveness is equally as apparent from this as from the extraordinary assurance that attended its institution, and became on each account a matter of the most inviolable obligation.

On the other hand however, before any foundation of acceptance was established by tolerating this corrupt estate, it displayed great condescension in the Divine Being to endure such a scene of depravity for our salvation, wherein he foresaw how indifferent the obedience of the best would be, and how much of the grossest abomination must necessarily be suffered to exist. Known unto God were all the remotest issues and events of things from the beginning, the sins of mankind were not less apparent as we shall fully shew in our consideration of the provisions ordained immediately upon the first transgression. These will amply testify that God stood in need of no effects or consequences to inform him of what was now to follow, but perfectly understood the principles of nature before the deadly qualities thereof betrayed it. What is to be inferred then? Is not the enduring of a clear prospect of so much turpitude and baseness, and receiving

ing of man into possibility of favour notwithstanding as much an act of grace as if the dispensation for acceptance had been granted afterward? Certainly there is not any difference as to the favour, but only as to the time when it was vouchsafed, which can make no change as to the obligation we are under for it; this is still the same as if the mercy had been conferred but yesterday, and must also continue in equal force forever; which distinction, had it heretofore been made, might have saved an infinite deal of trouble and dispute upon the subject.

Thus there remains no more room for doubt concerning the ground of justification after the fall than there is concerning the original of the creation, the one being perfectly the same as the other. Now the foundation of the world never was attributed to any consideration of the works of man, but always to the Divine good-will and pleasure purely; that God wanted not our services, but

was ever independant in himself and sufficient for the enjoyment of his own most perfect nature being what never entered yet into the heart of any man to deny.

His first formation of the species then could proceed from nothing but the gracious purpose of communicating and extending happiness; even the perfection of Adam in Paradise could not be the motive of God in creating him, but only a necessary condition in order to it; much less can our frail obedience, the best of which is comparatively so indifferent and vile, be the principle of our continuance or justification after the fall. As the purity however of Adam, tho' not the ultimate end of his production, was a requisite mean in order to it; so is our sanctification according to the gracious covenant of the Gospel essential to the great end of our Salvation. Adam could not be happy in the nature of things without his innocence, and in
like

like manner we cannot be saved without evangelical obedience; but far be it from us to think that the merit of our performances could be any possible consideration for our deliverance, the sole motive to be assigned for this is the natural love and benevolence of the Deity. Even the death of Christ that is called the price of our Redemption, and to be looked upon as preliminary to all acceptance of our own endeavours is originally to be resolved into this; and to be esteemed no other way the satisfaction for our ransom than as being the expence God was obliged to bestow, in order save man without subversion of his law, or violation of his attributes.

The order that the three things mentioned stand in is as follows: first the love of God, the great, original and independant cause of all things, without which there would have been no creation whatsoever; secondly the death of Christ proceeding purely from the same principle, without which this world in particular could

could not with any propriety have been allowed a being after man had fallen, as will in a short time from the foregoing principles be demonstrated: lastly comes the necessity of our obedience to complete and crown the two proceeding circumstances, without which our existence will be much worse than unprofitable and fruitless to us.

It may not be improper before I quit this subject to shew how apposite what has been advanced is to the general expression of the Reformers, (whatever may have been their particular apprehension) and how thoroughly it reconciles some of the most obnoxious articles of the church. "Original sin, say they, standeth not in
 "the following of Adam, as the Pelagians
 "do vainly talk, but is the fault or the corruption of the nature of every man that
 "naturally is ingendered of the offspring
 "of Adam, whereby man is very far gone
 "from original righteousness, and is of his
 "own nature inclined to evil, so that the
 "flesh

“flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit;
“and therefore in every person born into
“the world it deserveth God’s wrath and
“damnation.”

It was enough to draw down eternal perdition, not only on Adam who occasioned it, but also on all that have ever since succeeded and could not avoid it. Though it was not their crime it was such an alteration in their nature as was justly in itself sufficient to excite the utmost indignation against the being and existence of it. Both Reason and Revelation justify the general declaration of the article, and whatever may have been the peculiar notion that prevailed at the time of its establishment, the form of sound words was perfectly preserved in it.

Again it is said in Article the twelfth,
“that good works which are the fruits
“of faith and follow after justification can-
“not

“not put away our sins and endure the severity of God’s Judgment.”

The highest degrees of holiness at present are such dregs of obedience in comparison with what man was at first framed and fitted for, that instead of claiming for any an eternal crown and kingdom, they strongly recommended the whole species to destruction; they certainly could not be pleasing to God on their own account, but only acceptable thro’ his exceeding good-will and grace in Christ.

It is almost superfluous to mention that nothing could have perplexed this important doctrine of the utter unworthiness of our best endeavours to recommend us to divine approbation, but the opposition it was supposed to bear to the exigency of a reward to imperfect virtue after this life; which is not only void of all foundation in truth, but also the most unnatural hostility and contradiction that
was

was ever met with. For when the original of acceptance is rightly understood, it is not only obvious that mercy was as expedient for the permission of this state in the beginning, as another is for the justification of the Divine Being after it; but so far is the necessity of the latter from being any way repugnant to the grace of the former, that it is on the contrary the strongest confirmation of this. For what expediency could there be for another life, if it were not to rectify the impropriety of the present? This very circumstance then declares the exigency of grace in a Being of Supreme Perfection for its original toleration, and shews that it never could have been acceptable on its own account, when it required nothing less than a future state to reconcile its establishment; the greater the occasion for the one, the stronger of course must have been the disapprobation of the other. Hence it appears how very unnatural as well as needless the supposition must have been which

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sets the necessity of a retribution at such essential variance with that of the christian dispensation, when the former not only coincides with, but is in fact the compleatest demonstration of the latter.

Enough has been said to shew that notwithstanding death yet grace much more abounded, and the most wonderful circumstance which now appears upon the fall is that mankind were not consigned to everlasting perdition instead of this life; both on account of the sin of Adam and their own, which made them doubly obnoxious to it. It cannot be denied indeed that we are at present sufferers by his transgression, as we are obliged to struggle with many difficulties in pursuance of it, that would not otherwise have been our portion. Redemption has not immediately replaced us on the same advantageous footing we should have enjoyed without the fall, but Paradise that would have been bestowed freely on us, must now be obtained with

with much toil and tribulation; it is necessary for us to pass through variety of storms and tempests, before we are allowed to reach the intended haven of happiness. But what are any temporal, transient and short-lived evils in the scale against the forfeiture of everlasting glory? What a point is this life to eternity, and when we compare our actual loss with the fate that might have been sustained, and was on many accounts most justly to be dreaded, how does the prospect brighten, and the disadvantage dwindle almost to nothing? If we think that we have reason to lament our present woe (which however shall be shewn to be entirely a misapprehension of the matter) let us at least acknowledge ourselves obliged to the Redeemer that the misfortune was not infinitely worse; that the door of life was not utterly shut against us, and the possibility of our inheriting eternal bliss upon many considerations absolutely destroyed.

This leads me to a passage of St. Paul that exactly coincides with it, and is only to be explained thereby; as will appear from the great variety of awkward comments that have prevailed, and the facility with which the foregoing contemplation enters into every particular of the text. This, if any thing, will prove the great advantage of our system; and shew that it has more than human probability to depend upon, when it not only renders the doctrines of Redemption agreeable to reason, but also explains the positive apostolical account concerning them: especially when it shall appear too that the contrary apprehensions which have confounded the rational investigation of the subject, have likewise been the cause of manifoldly perplexing Revelation with regard to it. It is a small thing to reconcile the articles, I mean to illustrate the sacred oracles themselves by this Hypothesis in many passages that were unintelligible before; nor will it be deemed extraordinary that
human

human accounts should seem so unsatisfactory to reason, when it shall be found that the very circumstances which occasioned this, have rendered the divine originals incomprehensible from whence these accounts have been derived, and been so many insuperable bars to a proper apprehension of the scripture.

The passage I allude to is, 5 Rom. 15, 16, 17. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift; for if thro' the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace hath abounded unto many; (and not as it was by one that sinned, so is the free gift; for the judgment is by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.) For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.

The

The first opinion I shall produce on this advances, that the comparison between the gift and condemnation consists in a greater number being restored to life in Jesus Christ than have suffered death in Adam; in proof of which 'tis said, that men in the deluge died not for his sin, but for their own. In opposition to which Mr. Locke very justly urges, that so indeed they did; and so did the men of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Philistines cut off by the Israelites and many others; but 'tis as true that by their own sins they were not made mortal, they were so before by their father Adam's eating of the forbidden fruit; so that what they paid for their own sins was not immortality which they had not, but a few years only of their own finite lives, which being let alone would all of them in a short time have come to an end. Accordingly St. Paul himself asserts, that in Adam all die, consequently more cannot be made alive in Christ."

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This is very true, yet I cannot agree with Mr. Locke that “the comparison
 “lies between the persons by whom this
 “general death and general restitution
 “came, Adam the type and Christ the
 “antitype, and that it seems to lie in this
 “that Adam’s lapse came barely for the
 “satisfaction of his own appetite and
 “desire of good to himself; but the re-
 “stitution was from the exuberant bounty
 “and good-will of Christ toward men,
 “who at the cost of his most painful death
 “purchased life for them.”

This opinion is altogether as erroneous as the former, or rather more so; for that in one respect is right, viz. in supposing the difference to lie between the *effect* of the transgression and Redemption, tho’ it is very unfortunate in assigning the particular it consists in. But that the disparity is not meant of the persons of Christ and Adam (as Mr Locke insinuates) is manifest from the first words of the Apostle, but not as the offence so also is the free gift;
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and nothing can be more surprizing than that Mr. Locke should think of interpreting these of the persons, St. Paul having in the verse immediately preceding said that Adam was the figure of him who was to come. This must be understood of his bearing a similitude to Christ in some respect, as will hereafter be explained; and that the difference in question is not meant of the means or motive of the fall and Redemption (as Mr. Locke further signifies) but of the consequence of each, is also evident from the next words that follow; for if by the offence of one many be *dead*, much more hath the grace of God and the gift which is by grace abounded unto many.

This therefore Mr. Pyle explains of the efficacy and meritoriousness of Christ's obedience to restore mankind to life beyond that of Adam's sin to involve them all in death; as if St. Paul had argued that much rather or much more forcibly must the one have operated for
universal

universal good, than the other to draw down so much detriment upon the whole human species. His Paraphrase upon the three verses in question runs thus at large. "Whereas on the contrary 'tis plain, that the gracious Redemption by Christ is so far from being less extensive in its effect upon mankind than the sin of Adam, that it is in itself much *more available* to restore the *whole world* to life than his sin was to condemn it to death.

"As you may observe from hence, that it doth not only deliver all men from the effect of Adam's transgression, viz. death; but also procures a pardon of all our actual transgression upon true faith and repentance. So that if one transgression of the first man subjected all mankind to death, surely one such meritorious act of suffering as the death of Christ was must be much more available for the salvation of us all, without any performances of your law."

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The want of a due conception how the sin of Adam might justly have occasioned the eternal perdition of the whole human species makes it no wonder that men should have recourse to this explanation; the wrong notions entertained of the fate to have been sustained in him occasioned the original decree to appear highly injurious (as we have seen) instead of its reversal superlatively good and gracious. Hence it was extremely natural to expound the words in question of the Supreme Being (to whom mercy is much more agreeable than severity) being certainly more inclined and willing to extend the benefit of Christ's sacrifice to all, than such rigor for the offence of Adam. Such interpretation according to the common ideas could not but be very obvious, these clouds of error being however broken and dispersed we are now enabled to discern the passage in its genuine light and lustre; nor can there be a doubt that the Apostle speaks of the superabundance of grace conferred

red notwithstanding the fall sustained, it being so suitable to the rational consideration of the subject and express letter of the passage. The loss that now we necessarily undergo is that of immortal life and happiness for a short season only, whereas we might have been deprived of both upon the first offence for ever; well then might the Apostle say, that the gift was by no means as the fall or effect of the transgression, for what comparison between this short and transient estate (a descent to which is the utmost of our present disadvantage) and everlasting glory that might have been forfeited beyond recovery, but is now attainable through Redemption? Adam was a type of Christ, the two persons corresponded, and in one respect were perfect counterparts of each other, viz. that as in the first all die, in the second all shall be made alive; but not as the *fall* (which *παραπτωμα* should rather have been rendered in this verse) so also is the free gift, between these things there is no manner of similitude or comparison.

one as far surpassing the other, as eternity does a point of time, or immensity a span.

Thus the beginning and conclusion of the verse both coincide together, the two characteristics of the gift, viz. its difference from the loss and superabundance to it being perfectly consistent. But it is scarce possible to imagine that the Apostle meant to argue from the universal extent of the fall to the same inference of Redemption in a case where he had told us that there was no similitude between them; an assertion to this purpose was certainly a very unlikely preliminary to an argument a fortiori from the one to the like consequence of the other.

What Mr. Locke advances that the many in both parts of this verse must be equal is by no means necessary, it being plainly an indefinite term and applicable to very different numbers. The Apostle uses it as we do men, sometimes in a larger sense than he does at others according to the

the exigency of the thing, and leaves the particular meaning of the word to be determined by the subject it relates to. But that in the first of the present instances it signifies all mankind, in the last only the saints (the rest not being included in the consideration) we shall give further proof in the sequel, if there should be any occasion for it.

To proceed to the 16th verse, and not as it was by one that sinned so is the gift &c.—This is plainly not urged in confirmation of the preceding but contains a distinct and separate observation; for what can the repetition of the sentence mean but that the gift is different from the fall in a further respect and instance likewise? This it does with the utmost propriety, for as the Apostle adds; the judgment is by one to condemnation, i. e. the human race is ordained indeed to temporal death through the offence of Adam. Now besides what was before suggested, that this was alone sufficient to involve men in everlasting

lasting ruin, the Divine grace shone forth conspicuously in dispensing also as it did with the vast multitude of sins proceeding from it, the free gift is of many offences unto justification. How this is to be understood so as to become a just reflection, it is needless to repeat; that it is one however and makes the Redemption still more extraordinary is evident, as well from the Apostle's own declaration as from the argument advanced upon this head before.

The 17th verse is an explanation of the 15th and confirmation of my comment on it. The 16th is to be included in a parenthesis as containing a distinct but incidental observation, after having briefly finished which the Apostle returns to a more explicit illustration of the 15th. For having told us there that the gift was different from the fall and was much more abundant, he here particularizes in what the superiority consisted; viz. in the vast disproportion of eternal life to the short inconvenience of this mortal state. For if by one
man's

man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ; i. e. much more immense a benefaction of immortal glory will the just obtain by the Redemption.

It requires some stretch of imagination to suppose that the whole body of mankind are meant by those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness; there is not much reason to conclude according to the ordinary course of nature that all mankind are signified hereby; but if there were, there is no possibility of reconciling any such notion with the term *shall reign in life*, unless we conclude a fortiori from the fall that none can finally be lost. To say it means that all men shall be made capable of eternal life in Christ is to make an interpolatation to support a cause, for which there is not the least room or pretence; for if any phrase can be peculiar to them that shall actually
be

be saved, this certainly is such. The supposed inference then from the universality of death to that of Redemption in this place is proper for none but Universalists in the strictest sense, or those who contend for the final restitution of the damned; it admirably suits their purpose, and accordingly is urged by such; but it proves abundantly too much for those who would not presume so far, and infinitely overshoots the mark they aim at. This interpretation however of the efficacy or meritoriousness of Redemption to restore all mankind to life beyond that of the fall to involve them in mortality appears to have been very general; and seems to have been adopted by our translation in using the word *shall*, which by the forcibleness of its expression denotes an inference a fortiori, instead of will that is more suitable to our idea of the argument.

I must observe by the way, that this application of the gift, &c. in the 17th verse

verse to them who shall reign in life is a striking proof of the *many* to whom it is said to have abounded in the 15th not being equivalent to *all*, tho' placed there in opposition to the many that through the offence of one are dead. This cannot be if the 15th verse must be expounded by the 17th, and what has been said of the latter be admitted; which I beg the reader to remember, as I shall make further use of it in the sequel.

There is another interpretation of this passage by Dean Sherlock, who makes the difference to consist indeed in the superiority of the gift, but places it in that of Heaven to Paradise; for in expounding the text he says, "that tho' we die in Adam, we are not barely made alive but shall *reign* in life by Christ, which is a much happier life than that we lost." [Discourse on Death, chap. 2, sec. 1, page 70.]

I mention this to shew how variously men have been misguided and perplexed by means of the same error, that which led to the inference a fortiori having in all probability been the cause of this interpretation; viz. the hardship of the supposed decree that ordained all men to the present death without recovery for the sin of Adam. This is evident from what Dr. Sherlock says not long before, viz. that to have died in Adam never to live again had indeed been very severe upon mankind; here lay the fatal apprehension that darkened the whole prospect of the question, and obliged him to seek for extraordinary grace in the superiority of Heaven to Paradise on this occasion. It is a subterfuge resembling that of Dr. Stebbing before-mentioned concerning the difference between a state of immortality and retribution; the former of which he says we could have no title to by nature, while he supposes it would have been hard for us to be deprived of the latter. Thus Dr. Sherlock
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seems to think concerning the loss of Paradise, had it not been for the superior gift of Heaven which we could have no pretensions to; the distinction is of the same nature and proceeds from the same cause with the foregoing, but there is no occasion for the one more than the other, and that of Dr. Sherlock has this peculiar disadvantage; viz. that it greatly diminishes the disproportion between the things compared, and consequently disparages the superiority of the gift. Dr. Stebbing observes that one stage of being after this of like or even less duration might serve all the necessary purposes of a retribution, which leaves abundance of room for grace in the gift of eternal life; but if it be considered that Paradise had the privilege of immortality annexed to it as well as Heaven, there can be no such disparity as that between a short-lived and everlasting state between them, which is the circumstance that is here insisted on. The gift is as much superior to the loss as heaven is to this mortal life,

which must constitute a far greater difference than there can be between Paradise and Heaven, however inferior the former may be to the latter. The comparison does not any way consist between what would have been without the fall and will be through Redemption, but between the disadvantage that is now sustained in pursuance of the one, and the benefaction that the just are notwithstanding heirs of through the other. The account stated is between the actual loss and gift received from the joint effect of both, in order to have a distinct notion of which and decide the balance it was necessary to have a clear idea of what would have been without Redemption as well as without the fall. But the misfortune was that men had no adequate conception of this, they knew that without the fall they should not have been ordained to this mortal state, so that the loss thereby was visibly very great ; but how it could justly have been so much greater than it was they could no way comprehend. How immortality
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instead of being lost for a short season only might have been forfeited for ever, and men instead of being consigned to temporal might have been condemned to eternal death was utterly inconceivable according to the false notions of judgment that were entertained; whereby they were incapable of apprehending not only the infinite superiority of grace, but possibility of any grace at all. I therefore hope I have not misemployed my pains in illustrating the dark point, through the want of which Revelation as well as reason has been so manifoldly perplexed; nor can I conclude without repeating, that a scheme which makes that reconcileable which was before incomprehensible in each is equally proved by both; and has not only human probability, but also positive authority of scripture for its support.

B O O K II.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE NECESSITY OF ATONEMENT A PRIORI FROM ORIGINAL PRINCIPLES OF REVELATION.

THUS much of St. Paul and the manifold abundance of grace he speaks of, all which I propose on the most disadvantageous supposition; viz. that which commonly prevails of the institutions on the fall being so many arbitrary evils that might have been as well avoided, but were promiscuously ordained by God on all in indignation for what their first parents did. For even in this case it is plain (according to what has been before observed) that as far as the present life under all its pressures is preferable with the privilege of immortality annexed to non-existence; as far as our creation and preservation to be compleated without

without our own default with an everlasting crown of glory are more advantageous than the condition of stocks and stones, so far are we obliged to Christ for our Redemption.

But this is not all, I likewise propose to shew that the preceding supposition is false, and that the intention of the measures pursued upon the fall has been utterly misunderstood; they not having been ordained according to their common appellation as curses for the transgression of Adam, but adapted in wisdom and goodness purely to the corruption of our nature by it, and in order to our deliverance from it. Instead of wounds and scourges they were the most salutary and beneficial medicines that man in the situation he had sunk into was susceptible of; necessary for the human race at large, and such as it could neither subsist without at present, nor be reinstated in its former glory. In short I presume to make it manifest as the light, that as we have been rescued from
eternal

eternal ruin, so have we not been consigned to any temporal change but what was essential to our restitution; the divine administration being not only beneficent in a comparative view in general, but also with respect to every branch of alteration in particular; viz. expulsion from Paradise, institution of trouble, toil and death, as well as the establishment of a future Resurrection.

On this supposition, instead of being under any difficulty to explain the favourableness and mercy of Redemption, we shall rather be at a loss for some time to demonstrate the certainty of future judgment and condemnation, or shew that the penalties of the gospel will as undoubtedly be executed as they are enacted; whence we are led to a clear conception of the necessity of that satisfaction which consisted in the humiliation and death of the Son of God. For if the scripture had represented the Supreme Being as doing nothing on the first and fundamental transgression

transgression of the species, but what was necessary for their recovery of that happiness it had rendered them incapable of enjoying, without any extraordinary means to atone for the violation of his law, and secure the certainty of vengeance upon future disobedience, what must in all probability have been the consequence? Nothing less than the subversion of all respect to his authority and government for ever after. Let us for example suppose Almighty God declaring that, tho' he had given mankind a charter of everlasting happiness and they had forfeited it, yet since what was done could not be undone, and his Son had likewise interceded for them, he would not now fulfil the formidable judgment of his threats and their apprehensions. Instead of executing the denounced destruction on them, his conduct should be converted wholly to restore them to their lost life and perfection; nothing would be done by him but what had an immediate relation to this, and death which was to have been perdition

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should be the gate of Heaven, and no less than a direct passage for their advancement to much superior glory. In the last place however (that I may not seem to suppress a point of any apparent tendency to secure obedience) let us suppose the Supreme Law-giver most solemnly declaring, that whoever should incur the penalty of the second death, it should be far more terrible to them than the first ever would have been, even the worm that never dieth and the fire that never should be quenched; such was the portion that should certainly be inflicted upon all who should hereafter forfeit the gracious covenant of the gospel.

Let us I say suppose all this (which is the exact plan of the Divine proceeding in every particular but that of the satisfaction) without any extraordinary means to establish the certainty of future judgment; and would it not have appeared the grossest prevarication with the government of the world, and laying of a foundation

dation for the most unbounded presumption in mankind? The penalty, it might have been argued, is highly formidable indeed; but how absurd to labour under apprehension of threats and declarations of vengeance, when there is example of their being followed by such sort of execution? Mankind adventured boldly on defiance of the former covenant, and by experience found the alarming denunciation in reality reduced to nothing; yea converted into an ingenious artifice and contrivance meerly to supersede the portended destiny and punishment. If it be true that they obtained nothing by transgression, yet in the next place (it might have been asked) what did they forfeit? An inconsiderable trifle at the utmost, in comparison with what was to have been expected from the law and the just demerit of their offence. For tho' this life is by no means equal to that on the former institution; yet, besides its being a point only to eternity, happiness is allowed to preponderate even here; the present state is acknowledged

by the best judges to be no insignificant pledge or earnest in itself of the goodness of the Creator, tho' blended with some imperfections that appear to require a remedy. If it should be admitted then that our first parents, after having the penalty of the original covenant thus dispensed with, had reason to apprehend no mercy would be shewn them, should they become obnoxious to the vengeance of the second, which however when they had thus been trifled with might have been greatly questioned; yet all their posterity would have had the utmost ground of presumption remaining to build upon. We have not been guilty of the forfeiture of any former fundamental of life and happiness; the present establishment has been our only state of trial, and if our first parents were thus signally delivered from the fate portended them, well might we expect a similar indemnity and protection for final impenitence and transgression now. For at the worst we shall be in the same situation with them,

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in having once only forfeited our probation; and shall also have an established precedent of impurity on our side, which they never had the advantage of to rely on.

Hitherto have I considered the dangerousness of such decree of grace without suitable satisfaction, only with respect to man; but this is far from being the utmost that is liable to be apprehended, its baneful influence might probably have extended to the destruction of the moral laws of the whole Universe. That invisible and superior orders hold their existence on condition, and that no being besides God is absolutely pure or independant, I suppose will not be doubted; what a precedent then would it have been for them to find that creatures which had broken the very vitals of their existence, subordination and perfection, instead of being punished as was ordained, had only balsams administered to the wounds that were necessarily sustained in their rebellion?

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The revolt of such superior orders is by no means an unprecedented or unheard of thing, and whatever has been is capable of a repetition: but not to insist on this, it cannot be deemed in the least incredible of beings not supposed essentially or supremely perfect, that they should violate the fundamentals of their allegiance and existence; however innocent or upright they may be, it must be acknowledged that they are ever liable, and it must be always possible for them to fall from righteousness. If such be the case then, what could be more conducive to engage them in rebellion, or at least to make them think lightly of it, than the consideration of the punishment being thus dispensed with totally, the loss so comparatively insignificant, even this in the nature of things inevitable; and instead of the destiny ordained for such foul ingratitude and disobedience being duly executed, on the contrary all endeavours used to render their apostate state as eligible, and their return to their former happiness

happinefs as eafy as was poffible? I ask whether fuch adminiftration muft not without fome fuitable means to qualify it, have been anouncing of univerfal anarchy to all created beings?

But to return to man particularly, I fay that there is much more reason in many refpects for our being freely excufed notwithstanding final impenitence from the condemnation of the gofpel than could have been urged for the deliverance of our firft parents from the fate of the original law. For tho' they fell, their nature was far from a propenfity or pronenefs to it; of which ours is the reverse, viz. a fyftem greatly depraved, and ftrongly tending of its own accord to evil.

Nor was there only great difparity between their perfection and ours, but alfo between the difficulty of the different trials. Their certain fecurity confifted in one act of obedience only amidft a
variety

variety of all things else most freely granted them, and a crown of compleat felicity was the present reward of their fidelity; whereas we are situated in the midst of manifold and great temptations, not only incumbered with infirmities but surrounded on all sides with obstacles; at distance from the promised recompence, and so must be supported in the far more arduous trial not by the enjoyment of any immediate but by the hope of a remote and unseen reward.

Let us add these things together, and then say what comparifon between the inexcusableness of our first parents in not preserving their innocence originally, and ours in not obtaining falvation now? They were at the summit of perfection, where every thing is free from obstruction, smooth and easy; we are at the bottom of a formidable ascent, which it is extremely difficult to attain the height of (the path being every way so narrow, steep and ragged) but nothing is more obvious.

obvious than after having advanced some way toward it, to miss our footstep and fall down again. In short if great things may be compared with small, the condition of our first parents with respect to ours is a relation similar to that which a person already in Latium bears to a traveller at the foot of the tremendous Alps which he must cross to reach it.

Nothing can be a more striking proof of ignorance and folly than the vulgar objection against the supposed severity of the Supreme Being from the frivolousness, as it is deemed, of the prohibition broken. For abstinence from the forbidden fruit was the fundamental condition of securing eternal life to Adam, as evangelical obedience is to us at present; nor is it in the least surprising that immortality was forfeited by one offence, when the observance of one single circumstance was the only thing required in order to its preservation. The easier a probation is, the more heinous its transgression, and the

less the homage of allegiance required, the viler of course the ingratitude of its violation; here lay the great aggravation of Adam's crime, viz. that he should not submit to so small an obligation of obedience when endowed with the possession of so much happiness, which moreover would have been secured beyond possibility of danger by it.

But further, however light and easy a thing the prohibition might have been as to its observance, it was by no means such as to the consequence of its infringement; this is best known from the effect that followed, viz. all that iniquity which has ever since abounded. They who judge of the offence committed by the seeming insignificance of the fruit presumed upon, and ridicule it on the supposition of its damning man for an apple, are blinded by the same sort of prejudice as those who estimate the magnitude of all the heavenly bodies by their appearance to the senses. So diminutive
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and disproportionate to truth is the notion of the profane and reprobate in this particular, but what most surprizes me is that Divines should countenance them so much in their short-sightedness and folly; for there is not any thing more common even to the latter than to consider the prohibition as a matter of no consequence in itself, but only a meer trial of obedience which in the state of Adam was not possible to be made of him any other way.

“ For what, say they, should tempt him
 “ to idolatry, or to take God’s name in
 “ vain, or to murder his wife? How
 “ was it possible to commit adultery, when
 “ there was no body but he and she in
 “ the world? How could he steal, or
 “ what room was there for coveting,
 “ when God had put him in possession
 “ of all things? It would have been
 “ vain to forbid that which could not be
 “ done, and it would not have been
 “ virtue to abstain from that to which
 “ there was no temptation, but from

"that which invited him to transgress."
 [See the Critical Review of Chauncy's
 Differtations on the fall in December,
 1785, and Stackhouse's History of the
 Bible, vol. 1, page 49.]

What an idea must men have entertained of the state of innocence and immortality, to suppose it capable of a propensity (had it continued) to such vices as are here enumerated? Well may we excuse the illiterate and vulgar, when the orthodox and learned are found guilty of such mean, ignoble sentiments concerning it; as if it could have been addicted to such sins as are of the vilest, basest and most sordid kind; sins that are not even now to be committed but by the most degenerate and abandoned. However low and groveling the multitude may have been in their notions of the primeval state from the corruptions of the present, it might have been imagined that Divines at least would rise higher in their conceptions; and learn to estimate the importance of the precept
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required to be observed by the consequence of its infringement, which is all that turpitude there is now occasion for so much extraordinary interdiction to provide against. The first prohibition was not ordained for our first parents meerly while they should remain alone, but for a perpetual obligation and the preservation of innocence among mankind for ever. The violation of it was the source of the disorders that have defiled all succeeding generations, and well might there be no other commands than this ordained, because had this been kept there would have been no necessity or occasion for any such provisions. The present was instar omnium, because obedience would have been secured to all others in it, and the observance of it alone would have preserved man in such compleat perfection of reason and inclination, that nature might have been confided wholly to herself for the performance of every end and obligation. Duty would have been man's delight instead of difficulty, the right path

path at all times been immediately apparent to his view, and no sooner seen than suitably admired and followed.

How far we are now departed from this it is quite superfluous to mention; it is much more difficult I fear to enable men to fancy the possibility of such perfection in the species, than to perceive how distant they are at present from it. But it is beyond a doubt that the fact of such depravation must have created an additional demand for judgment, and that the saving of man in such case from perdition must have rendered the Deity suspected of partiality or indifference to sin, without some very extraordinary means to testify the contrary.

When we reflect that mankind were at this time comprehended in their first parents, like streams originally in their fountainheads; that the corruption of these must consequently involve universal nature, the diseases brought upon them could not
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but descend and deeply defile their most remote posterity ; in such view their offence must be allowed to have required destruction, not only as it was the destiny most solemnly denounced, but also to prevent the no less solemn consequence of its contagion. I heretofore exhibited this aggravation of the crime to shew the superlativeness of grace in pardoning it, as it must have been so extremely offensive to a Being supposed supremely wise and holy. I now revive the consideration to demonstrate, that such dispensation would have destroyed all idea of these attributes in the sovereign Being, without some suitable expedient to manifest his inflexible attachment to rectitude and judgment notwithstanding. There was a necessity for means equivalent to the relaxation of justice granted, otherwise God would have appeared indulgent to his creatures but regardless of what became of righteousness or the reins of government. His conduct would have seemed beyond imagination easy and remiss,

miss, Epicurus himself could not have desired a more supine spectator of the universe; for if any thing could have ever instigated him to pass sentence on man, this certainly must have been deemed sufficient, when the offence was not only so transcendant in itself, but so infinitely detrimental likewise in its consequences. What proportion can the malignity or pestilentialness of any persons utmost wickedness at present, bear to that represented of the original sin of Adam? Scarce that of an atom to the earth.

Nor is even this the whole, for the final breach of probation by our first parent was not only more inexcusable in all respects and fatal in its effects than ours can be, but the punishment proposed upon the one bears no proportion to the vengeance provided against the other. For what comparison between the simple death denounced to Adam, and the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels, that is ordained for our damnation?

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The second death appears almost as much to surpass the first in terror, as the demerit it is entailed upon falls short of the original transgression in aggravating and enormous circumstances. And can any thing (it might have been asked) like the execution of this on us be expected from that all-gracious, condescending power, which totally dispensed with a much gentler judgment, doing only when it became incurred what was necessary to save the species from it, after they had been guilty of an infinitely more provoking forfeiture of his favour and challenge of his indignation? The extension of the penalty in such case, instead of tending any way to secure obedience, must have contributed to confirm and strengthen every other consideration to the contrary; for certainly (it might have been urged) where there was so much lenity as not to execute meer annihilation upon treason so tremendous in itself and consequences, the same cannot but prevail against the accomplishment of far severer

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vengeance on misconduct that is comparatively such light, excusable and trifling trespass. When justice had been thus egregiously relaxed, the enlargement of threats would have only served to render them the more contemptible; high-sounding words (it must have been inferred) were only fulminated to supply the place of more vigorous and effective means.

To conclude, had there been nothing done in pursuance of the fall equivalent to the performance of the law in order to establish the certainty of future condemnation, what must have been the consequence of all these considerations heaped together, but an unbounded presumption on lenity to the overthrow of judgment and all moral obligation? This is what men have too much propensity to at present, they certainly need no encouragement to adopt such dangerous conceit, but the conduct represented would have given them all imaginable cause for the reception and entertainment of

of it; the fault of such fatal confidence is now their own, but without the appointed means would (like the non-entailment of a future state upon the present or denial of a retribution) have been an indelible and eternal blot upon the moral attributes of the Divinity. Believers must have imbibed the faith of infidels (if I may be allowed the expression) viz. that the destiny of damnation is a meer ghost and spectre of which men need not entertain the least fear or apprehension; with this difference only, that the chimera is of divine instead of human contrivance and invention to keep men in awe. Those in particular who chiefly object against the gospel now, that they cannot reconcile the idea of the Son of God being sacrificed in order to preserve the certainty of judgment and sacredness of divine commands from absolute derision, would have been the first and loudest to decry the final condemnation of the wicked without it for a fiction, had the present view of things occurred to them.

As then we have considered the vast advantage of triumph they would have had, let us in the next place examine how the death of Christ is calculated to bar all such presumption, and adapted to the purpose of saving moral obedience as well as man, without which either the one or the other must inevitably have perished on this occasion.

This second person of the blessed Trinity in order to frustrate the machinations of the devil (who otherwise must have succeeded in the ruin of the race of holiness) ordains himself a victim for the transgressors; to sustain the consequence of their revolt without the guilt, in consideration of their incurring the guilt without the punishment. Rather than not accomplish the Redemption of mankind against whom there were so many woeful circumstances, he submits to bring the divine and human nature together; yea tho' equal with God to become the meanest of men, and undergo the most humiliating death in their behalf.

behalf. Some have insisted notwithstanding that the satisfaction is not sufficient, forasmuch as the death of Christ was only temporal, whereas that which man must otherwise have undergone, would have been eternal. But there are very few that have joined on this side of the argument, the objection has proceeded chiefly from the contrary apprehension and surprise; viz. that the Eternal Son of God (whose habitation was the Heaven of Heavens and whose humble attendants were Angels and Archangels) should vouchsafe to veil the glories of his Divinity with the flesh, assume the nature of the meanest of all moral beings, and so far undergo the yoke of sin as to submit to death its necessary effect on men. Hence has arisen the principal objection always, from the transcendant dignity and humiliation of the person; that the universal Lord and Maker of all things should condescend so much for such fallen creatures (who at best seem but an inconsiderable part of his works) as to be

be made a sacrifice and oblation for their sins. I shall therefore address myself only to this part of the argument against the satisfaction, whence it will appear that the immensity of the expedient (which has hitherto excited the astonishment of most and exceeded the belief of many) is the most striking proof of its appointment, and magnifies the probability of its divine original. For the due support of law requires, not only that the infraction of its fundamentals be not attended with impunity, but also that the penalty ordained be not dispensed with easily. How dangerous a ground of presumption would have been laid by vouchsafing such a pardon as we have represented without *any* measure to secure the dignity of law has been demonstrated, and it is plain that the consequence must have been nearly similar, had any *light or trivial* means been instituted to absolve men from the punishment. It was impossible, as the Apostle justly says, that the blood of bulls and of goats should put away sin; for had the

the plan provided for our deliverance (tho' not entirely without means) been obvious, this would have tempted us to suppose as easy and cheap a method of salvation in future; as the non-employment of any means at all for our Redemption would have taught us to expect the same again of course. On the contrary however, as the foundation on which the first dispensation was raised was so extraordinary, there is no hope remaining of its repetition or renewal; since the circumstance without which our past recovery would not have been was so transcendant as to strike the mind with the most profound astonishment that it ever was once fulfilled, the argument is tenfold against any idea of its future application in favour of those it has been abused by; there is now no prospect left the violators of the second covenant, but the most fearful expectation of aggravated wrath and vengeance on the works of their iniquity.

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While the love and mercy of the Deity are displayed in so high a lustre, what measure could have been calculated to imprint a deeper awe of his inflexible wisdom in the support of holiness and judgment? Thus righteousness and peace have met together, mercy and truth have kissed each other; a free pardon is granted to the offending species, and yet the veracity of the law secured by Christ's becoming an atonement as well as advocate in their behalf. Had he been the latter only, he must have appeared an all-powerful patron of licentiousness and anarchy for the lawless to depend upon; but tho' he stood forth a mediator against the execution of justice, yet since he advanced so vast a price, so abundant a compensation for prevailing over it, all these dangerous hopes are banished; such generosity is too great ever to be expected more, consequently all possible views of impunity are annihilated for the future. Thus does the satisfaction, instead of requiring any credit from the scripture, reflect a bright lustre on it; and

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is so far from seeming a superfluity or incumbrance, that nothing can appear more properly ordained for the accomplishment of the end proposed. Indeed when we consider the stupendousness of the measure, we are scarce able to conceive what adequate occasion there could be for it ; but when the exigency is represented in a proper light, we are equally at a loss to say what other expedient could have been so suitably adapted to the purpose ; never were there any instrument and end so fitly accommodated to each other.

Here I shall presume upon another question, which the learned Bishop Butler thinks has been determined rashly, and perhaps with equal rashness contrary ways, therefore ought not to be entered into ; viz. whether God could have saved the world by any other means than the death of Christ consistently with the general laws of his government ? His Lordship says that the meaning of this question is greatly ambiguous, and I wish that he had stated

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it more particularly ; but as it is to make the best of it I can, if the meaning of it were, whether God would so properly have saved the world without any means at all, or by any others of inferior consequence to the present, I think it may safely be affirmed that he could not ; and so far is this persuasion from any limitation or reflection on his wisdom, that it only supposes him to act agreeable thereto. It would be too much for us to say that God could not have saved the world by any other means whatever ; the resources of Omniscience are infinite, and tho' the immensity of the method he has made use of for our salvation be such that we are not competent to think of any other which would answer the same purpose, yet it would be the highest presumption in us to assert that no other could be found ; when the present was so far from all human apprehension, before it was revealed. The stupendousness of the measure is to those who believe it actually ordained by Providence a demonstration in itself of the most

most absolute occasion for it in the nature of things, it being obvious that a being of infinite perfection would never have employed so vast an expedient in vain. Nothing can be more unphilosophical than to suppose he would, it is even beyond the absurdity of the Ptolemaic system, of which it has ever been deemed a sufficient condemnation (at least since the truth of the Copernican has been established) that it displays such an immensity of movements to no purpose, when the same end might be as well accomplished a much easier way. No man who ever believed the reality of the earth's motion, ever doubted the unreasonableness of the contrary supposition; whereas to admit the fact of the christian sacrifice and question its necessity is to believe that Providence, who is now allowed never to do any thing without sufficient cause, employs the most supernatural and transcendant means where none at all are required. It is the faith of the darkest ages in the most enlightened days, nor could there have been a greater

opportunity afforded for unbelievers to
 dispute the fact than by thus unwarily
 permitting its necessity to be called in
 question. Bishop Sherlock says much
 more rationally on the occasion, "when
 "we consider the great and wonderful
 "work of our Redemption, tho' we can-
 "not account for every step of it to our
 "own understanding, yet neither can we
 "suppose it to be the effect of arbitrary
 "appointment and meer will. The reasons
 "which made it either necessary or proper
 "for Christ to die for the sins of mankind
 "may be removed out of our sight; but
 "to suppose that Christ really did die for
 "the sins of mankind, and yet that there
 "was no reason or propriety in his so
 "doing, is to found revealed religion
 "upon a principle destructive of natural;
 "for no religion can subsist with an opinion
 "that God is capable of acting without
 "reason." [Vol. 1, dis. 2, page 71, &c.]

Nothing but the strongest appearance
 of his having actually proceeded without
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reason and on the footing of the most arbitrary will (which the common suppositions of the fall suggest) could have ever betrayed believers into such inconsistency. It originated from the false apprehensions of what would have been the future condition of the better sort of people, (those just persons over the face of the earth for whom Manasses in his prayer asserts that repentance was not appointed) if Christ had not come into the world. The difficulty was to determine how to dispose of them in such case, for whom it seemed salvation was necessary to be secured at all events, and not left to the contingency or free-choice of such an undertaking in their behalf. Here lay the great stumbling-block which made it appear necessary for the Father to be able to go on himself, and save the world without the voluntary satisfaction of the Son as well as with it, if he had pleased, in defiance of every thing that ought to have been concluded from its actual accomplishment. Thus has the Father been involved in
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the dishonourable imputation of indispensably requiring that which might have been dispensed within itself, and of exacting the most extraordinary sacrifice of his Son, when it was no way essential in the nature of things. This shews how excusable free-thinkers were in maintaining the necessity of vouchsafing pardon to repentance on its own account, when the firmest believers themselves were wavering as to the necessity of the other terms required in order to its accomplishment. I hope however I have plucked up the roots of this inconsistency by shewing, that no unjust consequence could ever have ensued to any, had not Christ been pleased to fulfil the conditions of their salvation; but on the contrary every thing that is bad must have been expected, had they been saved without such means. This fully shews the necessity of their appointment, and that independant of the Divine will or word it was not possible in the nature of things for the bitter cup to pass from our blessed Saviour; if it could have been dispensed

penfied with, there is no doubt it would ; but as it was not, fo it could not, any more than a final judgment of the world can ; to remedy the non-performance of which in the beginning (when there was fo juft occafion for it) this equivalent was ordained.

Nor is the grace of the Father at all diminifhed, but on the contrary increafed and magnified by the confideration, that he not only granted fo extraordinary a deliverance from original condemnation, when there was every circumftance in the nature of things againft it, inftead of any inducement to it ; but alfo when it could not be done without the expence of fuch extraordinary means as the facrifice of his own Son befides. I mention this the more particularly, becaufe the notion of atonement has thro' the medium of the fame error been reprefented equally detrimental to that of grace, as that of grace to the neceffity of a retribution. “ We read in
“ in the Scriptures, (fays a certain Author)
“ that

“ that we are justified freely by the grace
 “ of God ; but what free grace or mercy
 “ does there appear in God, if Christ gave
 “ a full price for our justification, and bore
 “ the infinite weight of Divine wrath on
 “ our account ? ” [See a Treatise stiled an
 Appeal to the serious and candid Professors
 of Christianity, page 18.]

This shews again how manifoldly perverse things may appear from one wrong view, and opposite to what they really are ; the doctrines of grace and satisfaction, as well as those of retribution and grace, having been urged as the greatest contradictions, which yet (when rightly understood) in the highest degree contribute to illustrate and confirm each other. For the mercy is not at all less free on account of the sacrifice, but far more generous and noble than it could have been without this ; it is plain that God must have loved the world indeed, or he never would have given his dearly beloved, only begotten Son for the Salvation of it ; since the death of
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Christ was not an arbitrary exaction against right and reason, or an unjustifiable hardship imposed upon him, but an expedient necessary in the nature of things in order to the accomplishment of the desired effect. In the present case it was not only great affection in the Son thus voluntarily to suffer for the world, but also in the Father to confer him for the purpose; as nothing but the benevolence of the one could have induced him to become a victim, so nothing but the same superabounding love and favour of the other could have influenced him to give such a person for one.

The measure proceeded not from an opposition of interest or inclination in them, but from their essential union in wisdom and goodness on a real and just occasion; Christ could not but be equally reconciled with the Father to the necessity of the means in order to the end, and the Father could not but be equally averse with him to the nature of the expedient in itself. This would be allowed

I know, were an only son in whom a human parent was thus well pleased to undergo the vilest humiliation and hardship, when a great event could not be brought to pass without it, and the tenderest of Fathers readily to grant him for the purpose; nor should we dispute in such case which of the two displayed the greatest kindness, but rather admire and wonder at the benevolence of both, in that neither would obstruct the benefit, tho' it could not but be attended with such obnoxious means to each. This is unquestionably what we should be disposed to think with regard to human nature, from the amiable affections of which let us learn to form our notions of the divine; the scriptures represent God humano more (if I may be allowed the expression) which is indeed the only way in which we can conceive of him, viz. by analogy to something that may be felt within ourselves.

I cannot but afford the learned and ingenious author of the Appeal another
quotation

quotation on this head. He says, page 19, " we all stand in need of free grace
 " and mercy, but it is a great dishonour
 " to God to suppose, that his mercy and
 " grace takes its rise from any thing but
 " his own essential goodness; and that he
 " is not of himself and independant of
 " all soveraign considerations whatsoever,
 " what he solemnly declares himself to
 " Moses at the time of the giving of the
 " law to be, viz. a God merciful and
 " gracious, long suffering, abundant in
 " goodness and in truth (Exodus 34, v. 6.)
 " or that he requires any other sacrifice
 " than that of a broken spirit and con-
 " trite heart which he will not despise."

I perfectly agree that the grace of God could not take its rise from any thing but his own essential goodness, and that he is a being of himself (independant of all foreign considerations) merciful and long-suffering, abundant in goodness and in truth. This he was long before the giving of the law to Moses, or there never would

have been such an institution, the want of apprehending which priority in Redemption has been the sole cause of this objection; as if God had been tenacious of condemnation to the utmost, and had granted a deliverance only for the sake of the satisfaction, which he would not vouchsafe too till the latter was accomplished, and the price was paid. It was only this false view of things that could have suggested such a reflection as the foregoing, when the sacrifice must have been every way as disagreeable in its own nature to the Father as the Son, and nothing but its necessity to the recovery of mankind could have made it acceptable to the one more than the other of them. It was the end that reconciled the means to each, not the means that recommended the end to either; the satisfaction was wholly for salvation, not salvation in any shape for the satisfaction, as the sabbath was ordained for man and not man for the sabbath.

Here

Here I must beg leave to introduce an error of the same kind by the celebrated Editor of the letters from Benjamin Ben Mordecai to Elisha Levi who says in objection to the atonement, "that many
 " sins were forgiven by Christ before the
 " supposed compensation was made, i. e.
 " as soon as he assumed the character of
 " the Son of man." [See the Critical Review of a treatise against Soam Jenyns by this writer, August 1777, page 86.]

It was forgotten by this ingenious author that the lamb was slain from the foundation of the world, or which amounts to the same thing, delivered in the determinate council and foreknowledge of God to be crucified by wicked hands; whereupon the scheme of Redemption was pursued in every particular after the same manner, as if the atonement had been fulfilled in the beginning. Forgiveness may be vouchsafed upon certain security as well as actual accomplishment of the necessary means; but it seems according to this
 author

author that there was no trusting to the event, and that the Redemption (if there were any) could be coeval only with the actual performance of the condition whereby it was procured.

This is a manifold error that the orthodox and free-thinkers have equally been guilty of, as if it were to be understood that man was necessarily in a state of reprobation till the death of Christ, and was thereupon released; whereas in fact he had no sooner fallen than he was acquitted from the fate he had become obnoxious to, and will not obtain any further benefit of the dispensation than was then vouchsafed him (notwithstanding the completion of atonement) before the final consummation. Thus St. Austin was so full of the condemnation of all mankind in Adam, that he asserted no other reprobation of any than the leaving of them to continue in the state of perdition they were in by reason of his sin. By baptism however the elect were supposed to be delivered
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and set immediately as free from the curse inflicted, as if the catastrophe had never happened ; that being presumed the means appointed for their partaking of the benefit afforded by the sacrifice of Christ. It was forgotten that whatever condition was ordained upon the fall exists at present as much as ever, and will not in any shape be remitted or removed till the resurrection at the last day. In like manner according to the ground of the foregoing objection man is supposed subject to condemnation till the death of Christ and thereupon released, which in every particular is false ; the original penalty being as I said, dispensed with and all sin forgiven upon evangelical conditions at the beginning in contemplation of the equivalent that was afterward to be fulfilled, which was also fulfilled in contemplation of man's future restoration to the immortality that he had lost. Neither God nor Christ was any way afraid of trusting to the accomplishment of either ; accordingly there was as much done toward Redemption before

before the atonement as there has been since, or will be before the end of all things. There will be no more dispensation or discharge from any circumstance of the fall than there was at the time it happened, till time itself shall be no more ; when death shall be swallowed up in life and immortality with all its appendages abolished.

Thus it appears how nearly the most opposite extremes come together in their source, and whatever difference there may be between Calvinists and Free-thinkers with regard to consequences, they are intimately united as to the principles from which their different persuasions flow ; the objections of the latter having no foundation to rest upon but in the delusions of the former, which the one no more see how to rectify than the other. Both are equally involved in the same error as to its original, and are liable to the same answers, as will appear from another objection made by the same writer
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to the satisfaction being a debt paid for our sins, who says, "supposing it true, who shall pay the debt to Christ, for according to this notion the debt is only transferred from the Father to the Son and the difficulty still remains. For can we suppose that the Son would forgive that debt without a compensation which the Father would not, and exalt the mercy of the Son at the expence of the Father? God forbid! An hypothesis must labour violently that is involved in such blasphemy." [Critical Review August 1777, page 87.] To this let me add a passage from a different writer in the same Review, page 156, "Granting for a moment that there are three different persons of one and the same being, is not infinite justice the essential attribute of the Son as well as of the Father? If it be, who made the infinite satisfaction to the infinite justice of the Son? Is not sin equally offensive to two persons infinity, that is eternally just? If the Son could not only pardon, but suffer

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“and be so severely punished to pacify
 “the Father’s wrath, why might not the
 “Father also, who could not be more
 “offended, pardon sins without an in-
 “finite satisfaction?”

The truth is that the Son did not suffer to pacify the wrath or gratify the resentment of the Father, but to secure the righteousness of his everlasting kingdom and obedience of the whole creation, in which the infinite justice of both was equally interested and engaged. The debt was entirely forgiven by each as to his own personal concern, nor was there any consideration paid but to the nature of things and exigency of moral government ; which indispensably requires either that the guilty shall be punished, or suitable means provided that their impunity shall not subvert obedience.

Here if I might indulge my imagination I would ask, as Archbishop King did on another occasion concerning the existence
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of Antipodes and motion of the earth, how many thought they had proved the impossibility of these things to a demonstration? And how far did they prevail on the generality of the world to believe them? Yet how weak and foolish do all their arguments appear on a real comprehension of the subject? For as our understanding of it is more enlarged and cleared, the apparent contradictions vanish. [See book 1, chap. 1, page 16.]

The same is applicable, I trust, to the doctrines of Redemption, particularly the atonement; while it must be confessed that the objections to them all which are now so fashionable, were unavoidable according to the false notion that prevailed of the original decree, the great source of the whole delusion. God has been thereby represented as an unrighteous Judge indiscriminately ordaining an undue fate on all for the sin of one, or what is equally inexcusable, their own inevitable corruption by it; the least deficiency of

obedience has been insisted on as damning sin, where nothing like perfection could be performed; while the only possibility of pacifying his wrath was by the punishment of an infinitely meritorious Son. All the benevolence or bounty which appeared in the Redemption belonged evidently to the latter, whose grace and goodness were extolled in this view to the disparagement of the former; it was highly glorious in the Son indeed to deprecate on such occasion the vengeance of the Father, and rather undergo the vilest humiliation and hardship himself, than suffer it to be executed on mankind. But it was equally degrading to the justice of the Father to require, or even to accept such heavy conditions of him; and it might well be asked, if the Son could not only pardon sin but submit to be so severely punished on its account, why might not the Father also pardon it without an infinite satisfaction? Especially when there seemed no necessity for any such expedient in the nature of things, but this loudly called for the dispensation otherwise

otherwise. For where forgiveness was on its own account so meet toward a penitent, because unavoidably sinful, species, to refuse it seemed sufficiently repugnant to goodness in itself; but to exact the punishment of an innocent and spotless Son in their behalf was aggravation of the grievance; it appeared that the Father, instead of loving either the world or him, was actuated by the most unreasonable hatred against them both. It is no wonder therefore that men were ready to cry out, *Blasphemy!* and *God forbid!* or that the institution of vicarious punishment, so far from being deemed an extraordinary act of grace, should be decried as doubly unjustifiable; which never would have been the case, had the particular occasion of it been properly understood. For wherever the law has been capitally infringed, nothing can be more obvious than that the penalty must be executed, or there is an end of all moral government in future; unless some expedient can be found that, while it saves the guilty from punishment for what is past,

past, destroys all hope of impunity for the time to come. How the death of Christ was adapted to this purpose, I trust has been demonstrated; but it never could appear on any other system, because it never could be shewn how the law of everlasting life had fundamentally been broken. No man can sin at present after the similitude of Adam, there is now no possibility of forfeiting eternal life before death as he did; but acceptance of the greatest sinners upon evangelical repentance and reformation in this life is an essential law of the creation, not a dispensation or discharge from its final obedience. The necessity of extraordinary atonement for a deliverance was therefore incompatible with the previous idea of a probation, in which the proper condition of eternal life had never been absolutely subverted.

For as to the plea that repentance, tho' it alters the temper of the sinners mind, and his moral qualities, is yet no reparation of the mischievous consequences of his former disorders, especially those that relate

late to his fellow creatures and the interest of society; to this it may be justly answered, as Mr. Foster says, that it prevents the repetition of them, and any constitution founded upon the intervention of a superior nature can do no more. For the death of Christ, which is represented as the ground of forgiveness, no more rectifies the present irregular and mischievous effects of vice than bare repentance can do without it. [Foster's Natural Religion, vol. 1. chap. 8. of the Mercy or Placability of God, page 208.]

It has no such apparent tendency at least according to the view it was represented in, either with respect to such pernicious effects of vice as are already past or such as are yet to come. As to its being any remedy for former evils done by sinners to society or their fellow-creatures, this is for the most part out of question; it being seldom pretended by the most orthodox that the death of Christ can operate in the nature of a restitution to God or man;

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or be of any efficacy to repair the mischief of past sin otherwise than by promoting obedience for the future ; which is the design of all punishment whatever, whether personal or vicarious.

But as Dr. Foster suggests on the supposition mentioned, reformation does this as well without as it can do with atonement, being the only law that is capable of securing obedience in our present circumstances ; it banishes all reliance on pardon so far as the frail condition of our nature will admit, and the satisfaction itself can do no more that is meet and fit ; the merit of the former therefore is fully recommended by its own exigency for this life, and the latter seems as unnecessary to secure obedience in future as unprofitable for remedy of past evil.

For in spite of all that could be said against the vast extent of evangelical forgiveness without atonement, Divines were inevitably exposed to this sad alternative
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and dilemma ; if the pardon of sin upon present terms of obedience be a proper rule of acceptance in itself for this imperfect state, no satisfaction could be requisite to recommend it ; if it be not, none could be meritorious to procure it ; for a perpetual rule of remission to all future ages on insufficient terms of righteousness for their nature cannot be sanctified by any atonement whatsoever ; but is directly subversive of that holiness proposed to be secured by it.

Thus it appeared that the death of Christ was either useless or pernicious, and must have been ordained to no purpose or a bad one ; such was the fatality of their argument, that the more it proved against the propriety of evangelical forgiveness without atonement, the more did it demonstrate against the propriety of atonement to procure such forgiveness. Whether this tendency of the doctrine to defeat its end have been sufficiently perceived by free-thinkers I cannot absolutely determine,

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as I said; but I am inclined to think from Dr. Foster that it has not, because in the admirable chapter before-mentioned he urges every thing but this that can be said against it. The necessity of pardon to repentance in this imperfect state upon its own account, the absurdity of ordaining any other rule, or this upon any other ground than that it is the fittest in itself, with the inexpediency and uselessness of the sacrifice to answer any better purpose, are so nobly represented, that I cannot but imagine he has collected every thing that had been urged before him on the subject. The present consideration however of the satisfaction (as it was proposed) being directly destructive of its end, of its promoting darkness instead of light, and, if of any efficacy, making the gospel a Romish indulgence or meer Papal dispensation, does not appear to have occurred to him. The chapter is so compleat, containing every thing but this contradiction, which is in itself so capital an omission, that

that I am surpris'd it has been over-look'd by so able an enquirer ; and since it was by him, I can hardly think it has been observed by any other.

Whether the orthodox however have been driven to this distress or not, nothing can be more certain than that if they have, it was entirely their own fault ; the satisfaction being neither to procure a proper law of obedience for which it could not be necessary, nor an improper one for which it could not be justified ; but when the condition of eternal life was broken by our first parents, and human nature universally corrupted, to procure a deliverance from the perdition they had made themselves with their posterity obnoxious to, and a due dispensation for the depravity that must afterward require so much long-suffering and forbearance. Immortality in this case was forfeited beyond possibility of their own recovery, and immediate destruction not only might but must have been the consequence without

atonement ; since tho' the sin against the forbidden fruit was the only one whereby the salvation of their selves or species could be endangered, it brought all other sin into the world, and therefore must have as loudly called for condemnation as any can do at the day of judgment. Their situation was widely different from what that of the most abandoned can be in the present state, and in order to apprehend the former we must cast our view to what will be the condition of the reprobate at the resurrection, when it is not presumed that the most contrite heart or broken spirit will be of any efficacy toward salvation. For it is confessed on all hands that long-suffering and forbearance (however needful to our probation here) must have an end, the wicked must some time or other be subject to condemnation without reprieve, and whatever necessity there is that the possibility of acceptance should endure so long as the present life, there is none that it should last for ever, or beyond this. The liberty of repenting ad infinitum after it,

it, would if possible be more absurd than the other extreme of salvation being finally forfeited by the most trifling trespass that can be committed in it. To receive sinners to repentance then at the last day would be altogether as improper as to reject them from it on the least failure now ; and should the Divine Being be disposed at the resurrection to deliver the wicked from the punishment ordained, and vouchsafe them a further trial for eternal happiness, it is evident that some vast equivalent would be required, or the nature of all moral government inevitably subverted ; nothing less than the most surprising means could possibly secure any obedience for the future.

Let it be remembered then that in such predicament have mankind been already rescued from perdition, and restored to a capacity of everlasting life, viz. when it was as much forfeited beyond their own Redemption as that of any will be at the day of judgment ; and tho' there were
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only two at that time in being, yet besides that the fate of all men was involved in theirs, there was the same exigency for the punishment of them as there would have been of much greater numbers. For if two containing the whole human race had been suffered thus to escape without atonement, it is plain that all who should ever come after them would have reason to expect the like ; the precedent of their impunity would have been at least as dangerous as that of all the wicked would be at the last day, and if what has been said be recollected, more so.

While the Redemption however was a discharge from the most awful punishment that can be conceived, yet is it with the sacrifice of Christ (when thus applied) entirely free from the objection of promoting anarchy and licentiousness ; since it was only an acquittal from perdition in one instance (which on account of the stupendous means required for it can never be expected more) and a dispensation of forgiveness

giveness to such sin in future, as the corruption of our nature rendered every way expedient ; a point that is widely different from a lasting rule of acceptance upon insufficient terms of obedience. There is no pretence to be derived in this case from impunity of what is past or undue relaxation for the time to come ; every prospect of unrighteousness is barred, and the security of holiness as great as it can possibly be rendered ; whereby the present state of sin is fully justified, and the satisfaction of our Saviour vindicated from every objection it was liable to upon former grounds.

Nor does this explain the nature of atonement only, but also many positive texts of Scripture relating to it, that were never properly understood before. Particularly, we have now a clear sense and meaning of the passage, That as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free-gift came upon all
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to justification of life, Rom. v. 18. We see plainly that as all men were adjudged to die in Adam, it would likewise have been utterly inexcusable had they been permitted in their present circumstances to exist at all without atonement. There would have been no justifying of the present scheme without the condition and end of a Redemption, the universal establishment of which mortal estate by virtue of Christ's death in order to a general restitution is therefore the point peculiarly aimed at by the free-gift coming by the righteousness of one on all to justification of life; as will be more fully shewn in the sequel, when I am more at leisure to consider the whole passage, at present I only hint it by the way.

In like manner St. John says, in his first epistle, chap. ii. verses 2 and 3, that Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Now

Now in what manner can this be so properly understood, as that the world was notwithstanding them permitted thro' him? It cannot be supposed that Christ was such a propitiation for them as to recommend the whole world to eternal life, or even a discharge from future punishment; but yet he so far prevailed in reconciling it to the Father as to save it from destruction notwithstanding them in the beginning; all the sins which it was infallibly foreknown would follow from the fall to the final consummation were thus far overlooked and pardoned. Thus is there a distinct and proper idea given to the passage where there was none before. I shall say more on this head in the conclusion, particularly with regard to the foregoing verse of St. Paul; but could not resist the opportunity afforded me as I proceeded of briefly applying these texts to our hypothesis on justification and atonement, as I had done before some others on original judgment and the manifold grace of our Redemption.

B . O O K II.

CHAPTER III.

DEDUCTION OF THE FOREGOING PARTICULARS A POSTERIORI FROM FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF NATURE AS WELL AS REVELATION.

IT cannot be denied I think that the scheme proposed has many advantages over every preceding system; many obstacles that were utterly unfurmountable on any other hypothesis are now abolished, nor are the doctrines of Redemption any more at variance, but all in perfect harmony and concord with each other. Satisfaction and grace, as well as grace and retribution, which were so irreconcilable before, are made perfectly consistent; and not only the justness of the original decree with the manifold mercy of the dispensation from it, but even the necessity of such
stupendous

stupendous atonement for our ransom (instead of being mysterious) is evident to our understanding; all which particulars were heretofore repugnant to human apprehension. In short I trust that a sufficient answer has been given to every objection upon former grounds, at least such as would have saved the several articles of Redemption from the disgrace that they have laboured under, had it occurred before they sunk into this. But it may not perhaps be so effectual to restore them after men have been accustomed to think lightly of them; and as new schemes are always liable to new objections, it behoves me to consider seriously what my own system may be exposed to; especially after having been so liberal in my reflections upon others. This is also the more necessary as there are many striking arguments against it at first appearance, which will in the end be found the strongest confirmations of it. It is the peculiar character of truth to be more thoroughly established by objection, and I can assure the reader that

the further we proceed in this case with the latter, the more fully shall we be satisfied of the former.

The considerations then that in all probability without anticipation would be urged against our scheme are these; that on the principles assumed of man having broken the fundamental condition of eternal life and thereby degenerated into so corrupt a nature as is represented, the succeeding doctrines of our manifold obnoxiousness to condemnation, and the expediency of such satisfaction for our Redemption are manifest and obvious. But what if the original presumption be itself a fable, or rather a chimera without the least foundation in nature to support it? The depravity of nature is as strenuously denied by some as it is maintained by others, and with how much greater force and cogency of Reason will from a little reflection become apparent. For how can it be conceived that God would condescend to establish a system so offensive

five to his attributes, when it must also require such infinite means to qualify and excuse the permission of it? The supposition is sufficiently incoherent in itself that a Being of Supreme Perfection should at any rate endure so foul and deformed a constitution as is pretended, but it is far more incredible that this should also seem so precious in his sight as to engage him in such extraordinary measures for the purchase and attainment of it. Nothing is more manifest according to the principles of a preceding chapter than the indignation that the Sovereign Fountain of Excellence must have conceived at such depravation of his image on its own account, but the additional circumstance of the sacrifice of Christ being required in order to its toleration is what must have greatly heightened and aggravated the objection to it; the necessary degradation of the Son of God instead of reconciling the Father to its establishment could not but have been an invincible motive for its perdition. We shall also be the more
strongly

strongly prejudiced against the idea of his employing such amazing means in favour of so obnoxious and corrupt a system, when we reflect that there was not the least occasion for it in the nature of things. For how much more easy would it have been for the Deity to destroy our first parents at the fall and create a new pair instead of them? Every end both of moral government and the creation would have hereby been fully answered; a sufficient example of severity would have been established for the sanction of the law, and the plan proposed for replenishing the world might have then proceeded as before, without any of those odious properties in man that are now so vehemently objected to, or the necessity of such vast and violent means to reconcile the permission of them.

Perhaps it will be said that Satan would have attained his end in this case, and that the Divine Majesty was determined to submit to any inconveniency that should
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not destroy its attributes rather than suffer him to succeed in his diabolical design.

But should we admit this plea as valid; how came it to pass that the Deity permitted him to succeed thus far in the beginning? Did not God foresee what would be the fate of our first parents, if left entirely to themselves; and might he not with a little assistance of them before the fall have effectually saved mankind without any of those heavy consequences either to himself or them that afterward became inevitable? Supernatural aid we are taught to expect as abundantly needful now, but certainly never could a supply thereof have been more seasonably vouchsafed than at the critical period mentioned, which would have saved the necessity of its constant interposition in future. *Principiis obsta* is the great maxim of sound policy, whereas to suffer an event so deplorable in itself, when it might have been so easily prevented, but must afterward require such
grievous

grievous means to rectify it, appears admitting of a dire defeat for the satisfaction of applying a lamentable remedy and last resource ; it is like sustaining of a deep disastrous wound with a view to try the possibility of a cure. Such surprising oversight is incredible of him who never slumbers or sleeps, neither is there any foundation in nature to countenance or support the supposition, man still retains the image of his maker, whatever may be said by the melancholy or morose to blacken him ; such dismal descriptions as are often drawn of nature are only the effects of a mental indisposition that sours at every innocent trifle, as a weak stomach sickens at the most inoffensive food ; or they are purposely contrived to gratify a preconceived hypothesis that is equally in itself as false, as dangerous to the attributes of the great Creator.

Such is the objection we conceive our system subject to, which is highly plausible in theory and agreeable to the principles

principles of the Socinians, who are altogether as averse to the doctrine of depravity as atonement. They think the former sufficiently repugnant to the perfections of God itself, will therefore spurn at our recommendation of the latter by it; and as the difficulty of original sin appears in this view augmented by the satisfaction, hence we need not doubt of the greater contempt and scorn being entertained of both. It would afford more than usual triumph to the persons mentioned thus to degrade two obnoxious doctrines at the same time together, by employing one to the detriment and disadvantage of the other; here then it behoves us to bestow very particular care and pains, and as the credit of atonement depends in great measure on that of degeneracy, we cannot be too industrious in establishing this chief corner stone; if it be shaken, the whole fabric of Redemption totters, but if it be firmly fixed we may safely defy all the enterprizes of its adversaries in future. For however improbable it may originally seem in

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speculation,

speculation, that God should ordain such stupendous means in favour of so unworthy and inadequate a system; yet when the depravity of the species is placed beyond a doubt, the historical account of its introduction, together with the means of its toleration, will sufficiently attest itself, and instead of occasioning any new objection, be found the only way to reconcile the fundamental difficulty to Providence. Every circumstance required to compleat the character and description of Redemption will afterwards appear as spontaneously to flow from Nature as it was before derived from suppositions of the Scripture; and tho' the discussion of depravity may seem an obsolete and exhausted subject, yet I propose to establish it by some considerations that are new and have not hitherto been much dwelt upon. As then we heretofore proceeded a priori on presumptions borrowed from Revelation, we now propose to demonstrate the same a posteriori from effects of Nature, or the most acknowledged principles of Religion; and

and in the first place we contend that however extraordinary the system may antecedently appear in speculation, yet there is no resisting of fact when it is supported by the clearest evidence of sense and observation. But we shall not remain content with this, or suspend our enquiries here; we likewise undertake to shew why God adopted the present plan, and that is infinitely more meritorious in every respect than any other which could have been pursued; we hope to root up the very foundation of objection, and not only to establish the truth of Revelation, but finally to vindicate all the ways of Providence to Reason.

With respect to the depravity of our present system then, if we only examine into the effects of human nature, we shall from a short enquiry find that it manifoldly abounds with error, ignorance, and evil. How often does an inflexible attachment to integrity and truth render a person a mark of obloquy and odium? Such venerable conduct neither the profligate licentious

centious populace can bear, nor the proud and overbearing lords of superior power endure; obsequiousness to vice, to prejudice, and folly, begets affection: this it is that constitutes the popular man and patriot, while a wise concern for the advantage of the people often excites antipathy and hatred; a Socrates is persecuted and put to an ignominious death, whilst an Aristophanes is crowned with all the triumph of applause that man is capable of receiving. Such is the fate of real merit frequently, to fall a prey to the foul and rancorous tongue of false accusation, ridicule, and envy; instead of captivating (as Reason would expect it should) it too commonly offends and dazzles by its brightness; and where it should advance its possessor, becomes the means of obstruction and detriment at least, not to say sometimes his ruin. Were men disposed to pay a due attention to Reason and the truth of things, it is not easy to conceive how happy a state this world would be; the natural evils of life are nothing in the
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scale against the moral, nor are the deepest misfortunes that Providence inflicts to be placed in competition with those that men draw upon one another and themselves by their own iniquity and folly ; storms and tempests bear no proportion to the ravages of human violence, and the most boisterous hurricanes are trifles to the ruins occasioned by the ambition, pride, and avarice of men. If we consult the records of history, what shall we find almost but perfidy and plunder, committed by communities against each other ;—but bondage and oppression of subjects by their sovereigns, or no less wanton tumults and insurrections of people against their princes ? Such are the materials that usually fill the memorials of ancient and modern times, the politics and inventions that in all ages have been most admired are those that have been most deeply laid for the destruction of mankind ; wars and desolations have ever been men's greatest glory, and with these the unavoidable calamities of earthquakes, plagues, and famines, are not in
any

any degree to be compared. If we depart from the more glaring scenes to the private shades of life we shall frequently find the latter sufficiently dark and dismal; the picture of mankind in miniature is often too melancholy to be viewed without lamentation and regret. The misconduct of parents towards their children, with the more flagrant ingratitude and disobedience of children to their parents; the desertion and treachery of husbands with regard to wives, and the no less common contempts of attachment and duty from wives to husbands; in short the mutual breaches of faith and obligation between all parties and connections are things too notorious to be insisted or enlarged upon.

But not to dwell any longer on such particulars, or pursue declamation as it may be deemed, the variety and abundance of evil throughout the present system is sufficiently declared by the doctrine of a future judgment and retribution. The former indeed may have been aggravated considerably

considerably, and human life represented worse than it really is ; yet that the wickedness thereof is very great, and that there has been in all ages and relations large foundation for complaint, appears from the necessity of so immense a judgment for redress of grievances. For there could be no occasion for this if the course of things were not abundantly wrong at present, the erection of so vast and superlative a tribunal requires an adequate extension of evil for the ground of its exercise and jurisdiction ; since it is notorious of this awful judgment to be hereafter holden for reparation of injury and wrong, that it is not a circumstance whereby few persons only may be affected, but which all mankind, from the first to the last, are deeply interested and involved in ; every one that was ever capable of action has a large concern in it either of reward or punishment, and should I say less than this the Socinians themselves would not applaud me. The business to be transacted then is nothing less than the redress of the whole

whole human species, or universal alteration and amendment of their affairs, whence we may very fairly judge of the power and prevalence of sin as at present. Suitable to the event must be the cause, and the disorder cannot but in every respect be equal to the remedy required; the very foundations of human nature therefore must be out of course, when the consequences of all men's actions, from beginning to end, must necessarily thus be rectified.

We shall be the more confirmed in this opinion, when we review the great original and constituent principle of the confusion that appears thus loudly to demand redress. As to the evil, it is universally understood to consist in the want of a proper reward to virtue and punishment to vice. The question is then, from whence it is that this vast deficiency arises? To which it may be answered, not from the nature of things in general, but from the overflowing folly and sin of men, which destroy

stroy the obvious tendency and effect of righteousness. For virtue has in itself the same superiority over vice as order over confusion, and if mankind would unanimously pursue the former, it would scarce require any further portion than its own intrinsic excellency and reward. The reason why good men so often meet with the disadvantage is not because they are themselves religious, but because greater numbers are differently disposed; if virtue were the common habit of mankind, if it were entertained so far as to have room to produce its just and natural consequence, it would certainly establish great and lasting happiness. But it fails at present, as any other cause may do, because not sufficiently applied; or if applied, because overpowered by more prevailing means. The discipline of the righteous is far from perfection in itself, but if it came much nearer to the standard of this than it does, it must needs be controuled and counteracted greatly by the opposition of the surrounding multitude, who have every op-

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portunity and advantage of numbers over them. In short virtue would, like the Macedonian phalanx, if duly supported, be both invincible and victorious here; but this is what it never was or will be till the resurrection, nor can any thing be more chimerical than to expect the right improvement of it before. The dominion of sin is inseparable from human beings on this side of the grave, which constantly disturbs the due course of righteousness and Providence in the world we now inhabit, and never can be rectified without an universal alteration and amendment in the next. To say then that vice is not an inherent and essential quality of our present nature, is to contradict the first notions of a future state; the necessity of the next world is founded on the unavoidable imperfection and depravity of this; nor without these premises are there any possible grounds for any such conclusion as the other to rest upon.

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We shall more fully enlarge upon this particular hereafter ; in the mean while I think it already apparent that the Socinians must be confuted on their own principles, if they will abide by them ; nor are the Arminians more self-repugnant in the manner of joining the expediency of satisfaction with that of a future state, than they in asserting the expediency of the latter and contradicting the sinfulness of our present nature.

If then the Socinians say that to suppose an unavoidable tendency of nature itself to evil is to cast a reproach on the perfections of God who formed it ; I answer, that to deny this is to destroy the exigency of another world for reparation of abounding wrong in this, which they themselves contend to be a necessary consequence of his attributes, and no less essential circumstance of Religion.

Thus far we are nearly upon an even footing, and there is plainly a difficulty on

each side of the question ; in order to determine which we shall hereafter shew that the notion of a future being cannot in any shape be reconciled with the perfection of the present, but that the degeneracy of human nature may with the attributes of the Deity. This must certainly incline the scale, besides which by the way it may not be improper to observe, that the Socinians, in disavowing the corruption of mankind, also contradict the self-same evidence as the excellencies and existence of God themselves are founded on.

From whence do we collect that there is a Being of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, but by the various display of such perfections in the universe at large ? How do we learn that there is a God of such high and adorable qualifications, but by his immediate works ? And if we conclude from thence that the Deity is by nature great and good and gracious, how shall we avoid the inference that man is by
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his constitution ignorant, corrupt, and foolish? If actions are to decide the question, have we not the same kind of proof that the seeds of darkness and depravity are in great measure essential to the latter, and that he is far from the being which in conformity with his end he should be, as that God is differently disposed, and has nothing but purity appertaining to him? The Socinian readily allows the course of human affairs continually to abound with evil, while he contends that the nature of mankind is originally blameless in itself; but certainly the tree in each case is to be judged of by its constant fruit, and the fountain (of whatever qualities it consists) should be determined by its never-failing stream.

In opposition to this perhaps it will be urged, that God is essentially and supremely perfect, consequently cannot err; but this is the prerogative of the Divine nature only, every being that is free and finite may depart from rectitude; and
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between God and man there is in all respects such an infinite disproportion and distance, that the comparison is not only improper, but even blasphemous to be proposed between them.

I answer, that freedom from sin is by no means the peculiar property of God alone, tho' absolute and essential perfection may be ; these are very different properties that must not be confounded, since our Saviour possessed the one as to his human nature but not the other, and they who shall be admitted to enjoy the presence of the Divinity in Heaven will likewise resemble it in this particular, viz. that sin will have no manner of connection with them. Tho' then the fall of the highest archangels proves that any created beings, however exalted, may revolt from righteousness ; yet the promised security of the blessed is an equal demonstration that the danger, much more the actual prevalence of vice, cannot be essential to free and finite beings. That the saints
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will be of this denomination there is no more a question than that sin will by an everlasting decree be banished from them, the dominion of it then throughout the present world cannot proceed from the free and limited capacities of mankind as such, but must be attributed to their not being duly adapted to their end; here lies the fatal evil, which is the great thing proposed to be redressed and remedied by a renovation, as will in a short time be made more manifest and conspicuous.

The Socinians will admit no other causes of sin than the liberty and society of mankind; thus Dr. Foster suggests, “that
 “men in their original formation, before
 “they are perverted and corrupted by
 “prejudices of education and custom, the
 “influence of evil examples, and vicious
 “habits wilfully contracted, still retain the
 “image of God with respect to moral rectitude.” [Foster’s Sermon on the Image of God in Man, or the Excellency of Human Nature.]

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This solution of depravity is the more deceitful, because it must be acknowledged in some measure true; nature is by no means so bad as some persons represent or others really make it, and men must in some degree be capable of corrupting themselves or they cannot in any respect be culpable; to which we may add that evil communication is likewise a very powerful instrument of seduction to multitudes who would not of their own accord be criminal. Thus men may not only defile themselves but one another, society is an unerring mould that fashions them according to its own impressions, and when we consider the great corruption of morals that has long prevailed throughout the world, it may seem the less surprizing that after this had been once established, it should be perpetuated and continued; so mighty is the force of example, prevalence and custom, that it would appear almost miraculous if any should altogether escape such manifold disadvantages, and not be in some degree polluted with the predominant contagion. Such

Such reflections as these have occasioned many to ascribe all the depravity of mankind to liberty and society as its only causes; they may be and undoubtedly are in this corrupt estate considerable means and occasions of moral evil, but what plainly proves that they are not the root or source thereof, is that notwithstanding both there will be no such effect throughout eternity in Heaven. The existence of freedom in this blessed state has been already observed, and that it will be also a condition of society is equally as certain; this even forms the principal part of heavenly happiness, and is the chief ingredient that its composition depends upon. The joys of the next estate are described as relative and mutual, there will be the general assembly and church of the first born, the society of just men made perfect, whose communication will consist of perpetual harmony and love; no prejudice or ignorance will remain to misrepresent or darken, no tempestuous passion to confound the universal interest and order; the selfish shall no more disturb the social

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principle, but become entirely subordinate and subservient to it.

That such will be the felicity of the blessed is not to be doubted, neither is the description any way superior to what may be deemed the proper condition of human nature; but that it is utterly incapable of any thing like such perfection upon earth I need not employ an argument to prove. Dr. Foster himself declares, "that
 "considering the present frail and weak
 "condition of mankind, the innumerable
 "obstructions they meet with to the due
 "force and clearness of reason, their in-
 "sensible prejudices, their many strong
 "and oftentimes impetuous passions deriv-
 "ed from nature, their avocations from mo-
 "ral thinking by the employments and
 "cares of life; abundant temptations ex-
 "citing, and numberless examples patro-
 "nizing, and in every situation and sphere
 "of influence giving a sanction to ill con-
 "duct; it is scarce possible they will never
 "offend, it is hardly probable they will but
 "seldom." [Foster's Natural Religion,
 vol. 1. page 207.] This

This is a very lively picture of human life, as every man's own experience must convince him; to which I may add that it is not peculiar to the present times, but equally applicable to every age of the world. The depravity we now converse with is not the consequence of a gradual and long increasing corruption of society, nor does every generation become worse than the preceding (as some have foolishly supposed) for there have been the same complaints of the world from the earliest institution of it; this is very amply testified by the remaining accounts of every period, and the notion that has ever been entertained of the necessity of a future state for reparation and redress.

In short men are in all ages in their morals as in their persons similar, may differ in circumstantialia but fail not to correspond in substance; they who are now in being are for the most part such as the ancestors they proceeded from, and the same will their posterity continue till the last trump

shall sound. The question is then how the event of things shall be so widely altered afterward, and the confusion which is now so prevalent be prevented in the next world? I answer, by a thorough and substantial change of nature; no other solution can be given, and this with some considerations that shall be hereafter mentioned will easily explain the whole disparity and difference,

For the fundamental cause of moral evil consisting in our inherent imperfections now, when this is removed the effect that flows from it will cease of course; were men to be placed in the same situation and circumstances of being hereafter as they are in at present, the consequences would be much the same; temptations would subdue them from without, infirmities betray them from within, and the future scene instead of a remedy would only be a repetition of the evil that is now so much complained of. But however sin may be essential to this present nature, it
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has no such connection with freedom, society or finite capacity; the two first of these particularly will, instead of snares and occasions of falling, be never-failing means of holiness and happiness in Heaven; nor will the last be any impediment throughout eternity, when nature shall after this life be suitably altered and adapted to its purpose,

It is strange then that the course of things in this world should perpetually abound with evil so as to require an universal judgement and new life, yet there should be no fault or blemish in the disposition of our present nature; that sin should have ever prevailed in it from the beginning, should continue so to do till it shall have an end, but afterward be totally destroyed, and yet have no manner of original foundation or subsistence in it. Such supposition is incredible to any who in the least consider the doctrine of a future state, the exigency and use of which are both utterly superseded by those who deny the sinfulness

infulness of our present system. For as there would be no occasion for a better life if this were not bad or abundantly evil in itself, so would it be impossible for another to be of any service to the end desired without a far different constitution from the present, which would ever be productive of the same effects and consequences as now exist. They who expect any substantial amendment in human affairs without this necessary alteration, unfortunately overlook the premises in their way to the conclusion; and not only erect a scheme as baseless as the fabrick of a vision, but likewise heighten the similitude of a dream, by yielding their imagination passive to the grossest contradictions.

Thus much of the necessity of a thorough change in the constitution of mankind (which certainly implies the badness of it at present) from theory and reason. Nor let us be afraid of any way offending nature or its Author by this deduction;
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for how can any thing be concluded less from the speedy dissolution as well as total renovation that man is ordained by Providence to undergo? What is to be inferred from the Divine decree that this tenement shall after a short continuance be destroyed and rebuilt entirely from the ground, but that it is fundamentally impaired and ruinous beyond repair? We must at least suppose that it is essentially unequal to the desired effects, and that these can never be answered as it stands, when it thus experimentally appears that nothing will suffice without its sustaining a new foundation and fabric from the beginning. If then there could be any doubt of the depravity of the human constitution from speculation and reason, or the authority of these should be deemed insufficient to decide on a matter of so great importance as a fundamental fault in nature; yet I think the concurrent testimony of nature itself, and determination of its own Author to the same purpose, must be allowed a verdict of which there cannot

not be any question, and from whence lies no appeal.

But in evasion of this perhaps it may be said, that there is another substantial cause to be assigned for the dissolution and renovation of the species. For mankind being ordained for immortality in the next world, must on this account alone sustain the alteration mentioned, and tho' they may not all sleep, yet must all be changed as to the vitals of their existence. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of Heaven, i. e. the principles of a frail and momentary state are utterly inadequate to the system of a being without end; men must consequently for meer natural reasons undergo a total alteration of their frame, which is not only a sufficient explanation of the matter in itself, but also that which is expressly given us by St. Paul.

I grant that a renovation is on this account required, but at the same time
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assert that the immortality of man in future is neither the only nor original cause of the change. As to those who say that it is either, I would ask them, what is the reason of his not being allowed it here? Or why is he not invested with immediate possession of the inheritance ordained for him? Because he is absolutely unfit for the enjoyment of it at present; for while sin continues to hold dominion over him, eternal life would prove a curse instead of blessing to him; vice would even blast the bliss of the celestial mansions, so that if the race were capable of an admission there as they are, they would be utterly unqualified for the participation of its happiness. It is therefore adjudged that this constitution be demolished as the only effectual method of destroying sin, and thereby investing man with his proper dignity of nature.

Thus does the consideration of eternity revolve itself at last into the same conclusion with that derived from the retribu-

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tion and renovation of the species. The future immortality of our being is indeed a very ample reason for the necessity of its fundamental change, but affords no manner of cause for the short-lived existence of the present system; for this we must recur to the original principle of sin, which renders it unfit for a longer continuance, and is the only circumstance that can afford us any proper solution of the matter.

It would answer no purpose for the Socinians to ask, Why then was not man made free from sin in the beginning, and thereupon endowed immediately with the possession of that immortality which was finally ordained for him? This would precipitate them directly into our doctrine which asserts, that each of these particulars was actually the case, and that immortality was afterward withdrawn on the introduction of depravity. I therefore suppose it would be rather said by them, that tho' God designed mankind for eternal life from the beginning, yet

yet it was never intended they should enjoy it without some probation; this is what his wisdom found expedient, and his goodness determined that it should be but short, which fully accounts for the small span of this life before men are admitted into the infinite and boundless duration of the next.

But should we admit this in every particular, it will by no means be conclusive to the point in question; for if we suppose it the original council and design of God for the wisest purposes that man should not be finally confirmed in the possession of eternal life without some previous preparation for it, yet why must he not only undergo a removal from this world but also wait till the end of it is accomplished before he can receive his ultimate reward? The season of probation must indeed expire before that of retribution can commence, and the present constitution of things may not admit of a proper scene for both; but why must it be abolished

before immortality can be established, and man invested with his allotted privilege of nature? For the same reason as occasions the entire dissolution and renewal of the human frame and composition, viz. that darkness and light, depravity and perfection, cannot possibly consist or dwell together. Sin, as I have said, would blast and confound the happiness of Heaven, so that if man were not debarred at present by Divine decree from possession of the one, he would be utterly disqualified by nature for the enjoyment of the other. I add, that there is nothing but sin which renders even this world incapable of being made an Heaven, accordingly St. Peter teaches that from its dissolved appendages and materials will be created a new Heaven and Earth in which dwelleth righteousness, 2 Epist. iii, 13 and 14; the want of this at present being the sole cause why the world cannot be advanced to the proposed perfection now. Hereby are we led to a clear conception why this establishment must have an end, and man must

must also wait till the restitution of all things before he can be received into his proper element and station; the world was ordained not only for a temporal but likewise an everlasting habitation, it cannot however serve both purposes at once, and so long as it is infested with sin it must necessarily be confined to the former; but when the constitution of man is rectified, and sin abolished, the world itself will also be renewed in glory, there being nothing but this that hinders it from being fitted up for the highest purposes of nature.

Thus does the dissolution and renovation of the earth, as well as that of the human frame, concur with every property of a future state, viz. its universal judgment, retribution, constitution of happiness and duration, to establish the depravity of our present being; which if the Socinians would duly weigh, they never would proceed so far as to an utter denial of this (however it might seem to militate with

with the Divine perfections for a season) when it is thus essentially interwoven with every fundamental of another life. For the attributes of God themselves would not be productive of much benefit to Religion without their leading to this necessary conclusion, that may be stiled the consummation of all its doctrines ; which shews the folly of being anxious for the premises to such an extreme as to supersede the consequence that is inseparably connected with them and the main design of teaching them. It answers little purpose of Religion to destroy one part of it in favour of another, much less to sacrifice the great end thereof, or that which is the sum and substance of the whole, to any particular branches of the system, however conducive or essential to it. There would be no excuse for such a conduct if it were not for the exaggerated descriptions that have been given of the corruption of nature, and the wrong notions that have prevailed of our obnoxiousness to condemnation through it ; as if
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there were nothing in man but unavoidably bad inclination or irresistible propensity to evil, and this instead of a reason for the original suppression of the species, were an argument and ground for its continuance in order to the propagation of depravity and misery throughout eternity. Such accounts are irreconcilably repugnant to every Divine perfection, but when the doctrine of degeneracy is stripped of its misrepresentations, and the true design of its permission properly displayed, it will be found as consistent with the attributes of God as with their necessary consequence, a future state ; indeed I will be paradoxical enough to say that it will be as demonstrative of the former as it is deducible from the latter, and that the Divine perfections will be most compleatly manifested thereby. Thus will the system of Religion appear one uniform and consistent whole, not made up of heterogeneous and jarring parts, but such as unite and mutually embrace each other ; its apparent contradictions flow from false persuasions,

persuasions, not its real doctrines ; and let what has been said of the harmony subsisting between the present depravity and future renovation of our being serve as a specimen of what will be hereafter shewn between permission of the former and the existence of Divine perfection.

This will have weight I trust with men of religious principles, which undoubtedly the Socinians are, however they fall short or are in some particulars defective of the truth ; the sincerity of their regard for a future state, and indeed for revealed as well as natural Religion in general, is not to be questioned ; tho' from superficial views they sometimes precipitate themselves into extremes that are highly detrimental to both, especially the former. But as there are many men of reprobate imagination who will not be influenced by any principles of Religion, and by whom all the arguments from a future state will be treated as nullities and cyphers, I must beg leave to detain
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the reader some time longer while I contend with infidels on the subject of our imperfection. The principal design of this treatise is indeed to reconcile revealed with natural Religion, not to demonstrate the fundamentals of the latter but from its most acknowledged doctrines to deduce the contested points of the former; yet as an opportunity occurs of establishing this article, that seems so intimately interwoven with all the vitals of our faith, even on the principles of the most sceptical and unbelieving, I cannot dismiss the subject without some further considerations on it.

Mr. Hume (whom the world had an undoubted right to consider as one of the last mentioned persons) advances, "that the dignity of human nature is
 "falsly undermined by forming a com-
 "parison between men and beings of the
 "most perfect wisdom; but if we form
 "an estimate between men and other
 "animals, which are the only creatures
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“endowed with thought that fall within
 “the cognizance of the senses, this will
 “be highly favourable to mankind.” [See
 Hume on the Dignity of Human Nature,
 Vol. 1, Essay 14, pages 144, &c.]

It may at first sight seem expedient then
 on more accounts than one to drop the
 comparison between this life and Heaven,
 as improper for the persons I now propose
 to treat with; since the latter may be con-
 sidered by them as a superior condition,
 if not a visionary and chimerical state of
 being, that has no foundation but in fancy,
 and never was or will be in the nature
 of things.

Such a romance indeed it would be
 without the necessary change insisted on,
 which argues the present depravity of our
 nature, while at the same time Heaven in-
 cludes in its description nothing beyond
 the proper rank and dignity of the species.
 To consider it as an ideal or superior con-
 dition merely because we have never seen
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the like (when it is in every respect so
 suitable to the constitution of our being,
 and in fact the very state that this should
 correspond with) would be a proof of
 such narrowness of mind as is only to be
 accounted for from that imperfection
 which is denied, and which cannot extend
 its views beyond what falls within cogni-
 zance of the senses. For that the future
 state of the blessed, how far soever it ex-
 ceeds the present, is not superior in itself
 to the due condition of mankind is evi-
 dent from every circumstance that has
 been represented of it. Retribution, the
 great leading quality, implies not any exal-
 tation of the species beyond their proper
 sphere, but only a necessary redress to
 the imperfection of the system they now
 labour under, which we have also shewn
 to be the fundamental cause of their reno-
 vation. The happiness of Heaven that
 we described too was nothing more than
 the due improvement of our social state,
 for the same purpose of a remedy to its
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present evil ; and tho' eternal life indeed is not essential to this, but a much shorter space may make amends for the irregularity of rewards and punishments in this world ; yet if it be not necessary on such account, it has nevertheless been considered always as an inherent property of the species, witness the arguments among the heathens to prove the immortality of the soul from the very principle of its being. It is of no consequence to me whether these were satisfactory or not, it is sufficient for my purpose that immortality has constantly been contended for as the real property of mankind, and that extinction has on the contrary been insisted on as foreign to their nature. The objection then to our comparison of this life with the next, on a presumption that the latter implies a higher state of being, can have no ground to stand upon, if the matter be duly weighed ; but I have thought proper to obviate it by the way, as it might otherwise have had an undue influence on many
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of a much better class than those I am now going to contend with.

Let us descend then to a comparison of man with the brute, a scheme that must be free from all objection of Deists as well as Christians; and this I shall enter into the more willingly, since while it shews the depravity of human nature it may be made subservient to many moral purposes, and applied to stigmatize abuse of manners. In the ensuing discourse I shall therefore unite these views together, and I hope I shall not be deemed to wander from my design while I expatiate largely on the obligation of morals, especially such as from the prevailing disposition of the age appear to stand most in need of being insisted on. The consideration of these is at all times highly expedient in itself, and is withal so intimately connected with our plan of proving the depravity of mankind; that while we dwell upon the excellency of the former, we never can be far from shewing the corruption of the latter.

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In the first place I assert then that the brute creation, however inferior to the human race in station, are much more perfect in their kind ; in proof of which I urge the generation and nurture of their species. These it must be confessed are no mean and ordinary ends, but principal and chief concerns of nature ; the due propagation and preservation of their species are the two great purposes on earth for which all creatures were ordained ; they are the necessary foundations for every other property and relation to subsist upon, and to find whether men or inferior animals excel in these particulars, let us examine the proper œconomy and actual conduct of each with regard to both.

With respect to generation I observe then that quadrupeds are permitted to range indiscriminately and at large ; because nature deals out every thing to them with a liberal and spontaneous hand, so that the females are at all times able to sustain

tain themselves and whatever offspring may proceed from them. Brute wants not the help of brute, as has been well observed, for any comfort or convenience of life; God feeds and cloaths the cattle by his Providence, without any labour of their own; nor are the young in want of any thing but milk for a short season, with which the dam is plentifully provided for them. No connection of parents for the support of these is requisite between animals of the present tribe, and therefore Providence has laid them under no unnecessary confinement or restriction to each other.

From the fowls of the air this liberty is removed, for their food is not so obviously presented to them, and the maintenance of the young requires the industry of both the parents; accordingly they are united by an indissoluble bond, so long as an occasion for their association lasts. In the course of a Summer the young are qualified to provide for their own subsistence,

sistence, and thereupon the connection is destroyed between the parents ; but never does it cease till the common concern for which it was ordained expires, while any exigency of the institution lasts these creatures always preserve the most inviolable attachment toward each other and their young.

The proper conduct of mankind in this particular is evidently of the latter kind, there is not any species that affords an instance of a female so unable to support herself and offspring as the human ; for pregnancy is not only a condition of extraordinary disability and danger to the woman beyond what is allotted to any other creature, but there is no inferior animal so destitute and helpless as an infant is by nature. Certainly none remains so long an object of assistance, so that whatever necessity there may be for the united endeavours of both the parents for mutual comfort and the preservation of their species, this is manifoldly multiplied among mankind. Neither

Neither is it possible for any certain period to be fixed but death, when the conjugal association between the last shall end. In every other instance almost a numerous offspring are produced and bred at the same time, which soon arrive at their perfection too, so as to discharge the parents from all obligation of further care; and then an interval of generation succeeds, whereupon the connection may be dissolved between those creatures that have been connected. But with regard to man and woman this rule is in every shape inverted, they have commonly but one child at a birth, and this alone requires more pains in infancy than all the numerous breed of inferior animals together; besides which how many seasons must expire before the human pair can promise themselves any relaxation of their concern, and when is it that any suspension of generation in their case can ever with certainty be depended on? In these things the constitution of mankind is

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widely different from that of all other creatures ; the incumbrance of issue, instead of being removed or in the least diminished to the former, is likely for a long time to encrease and accumulate both in weight and number ; and tho' the possibility of further offspring may at last become extinct, yet even after its propagation ceases how shall we undertake to say, when its final establishment and concern shall end ? Death will too probably dissolve the partnership between man and wife before this event takes place, we need not be anxious for any earlier period, the apprehension lies on the other side ; lest the dissolution should come too soon of its own accord, rather than the union subsist too long. It has been very justly observed of second marriages that there is room too often made for them by nature, there is no necessity of multiplying their inconveniences by any human art of separation or divorce ; and if any pair survive the compleat education and establishment of their children in the world,

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let them desire no further dispensation, but spend the remainder of their days together in gratitude to Providence for this indulgence of his mercy vouchsafed toward them. Even if the man were permitted after this to abandon the long-continued consort of his labours, and nature were not smitten with abhorrence at the supposition of settling his affections on another in order to future issue; yet would it be as preposterous as for the fowls of the air, when in Summer they have nurtured and matured their offspring, to prepare for renewal of the same in Autumn, against all the dangers and disasters of impending Winter.

Thus there appears a necessity of unalterable attachment between the male and female among mankind beyond what subsists in any other species. But is this order suitably observed among them? Are they found to adhere to the rule above all other creatures in proportion to their obligations to it? The popularity and prevalence

lence of the contrary practice need no words to represent them, and I almost blush to mention that man is the only creature in the universe that is known to violate the constitution of his being in this important article of generation. The four-footed beasts presume to range at large, it being plainly the will of their Creator that they should; the fowls of the air for whom a stricter discipline is requisite, inviolably maintain their order; mankind on the contrary, on whom such superior obligations of attachment lie, not only trample under foot the prime law of nature in this particular, but all the additional security that civil society can raise; even the sanctuary itself of marriage is frequently transgressed, and found too weak a barrier either to obstruct or to confine the torrent of their dissolute, outrageous passion.

Thus much of the extraordinary breach of the great law of propagation among mankind; and suitable to this of course
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is their concern for the subsequent preservation of their issue. The principle of vagrant intercourse between the sexes is gratification of desire without regard, or rather in contradiction to the end for which it was ordained; while the profligate fulfils the first, he wishes for nothing more than that the last may perish; the proposed blessing of increase is to him the bitterest curse that can be imagined, and what for himself he would destroy and banish from the nature of things, if possible; in short that which is the first and fundamental design of the creation, it is his supreme desire to supersede and sacrifice to his own sordid, blind, and brutish passion.

Such is the genuine character and principle of impurity, agreeable to which I say is the natural effect proceeding from its pursuit. For if amidst confusion of commerce between the sexes any offspring should be begotten, the care of it between the multitude becomes deserted and abandoned;

done; even if a desire to evade the obligation of this were not the previous motive, it is the never-failing consequence of an undistinguished intercourse with women, which by rendering the father doubtful abolishes the possibility of his affection toward the issue. That instinct and concern indeed which Providence has so wisely instilled into the breast of every animal for the preservation of its species is not only eradicated, but the contrary quality of hatred planted in the place of it; the ill-fated infant instead of being loved is loathed in general as a monster by both its parents, nor is there any thing that they more ardently long for than its death. And why? Because it was born in despite of them and in direct opposition to their end, their purpose was to fulfil their own inclination in exclusion of all the consequences designed by it, accordingly it is no wonder that the object of their disappointment should be their aversion; it would be much more extraordinary if under such unhappy circumstances it should be

be any other matter of concern to them. The condition of the human offspring is at all times so infirm and feeble in itself, that the utmost care we can employ will often prove too little for its preservation, there is no need of this disposition in its parents to promote its destiny; nor need I expatiate on the abortions and even murders that are frequently by experience found, and may more frequently be supposed the consequences of such dire antipathy to its being.

Throughout the whole tribe of brutes there is no such unnatural instance of aversion to be found; as there is no violation of the right order of generation among them, so is the end of it very seldom if ever, frustrated by dislike or indifference to their young. On the contrary it is very surprizing how inferior animals unanimously exert themselves in favour of their offspring, especially where man is not interested in its protection; the most timid expose their lives in its behalf, and on apprehension

prehesion of its danger often presume to attack those very creatures they at all other times will flee from. Among animals too between whom a partnership is requisite, an association is not always formed, but never voluntarily dissolved, as we observed, before the end of the engagement is fulfilled; it would be happy for the human species could the continuance of this natural bond of love, even when it is duly made, be equally applied to them.

But further, if promiscuous intercourse between men and women be injurious to the preservation of their species, much more pernicious is it to the proper education of them. If the fruit of unlawful intrigue be not by some means or other destroyed, or if it be barely preserved from perishing, this is the utmost we can expect in general; for should the infant escape the multiplied hazards of aversion from its parents, or of being consigned with indifference to the care of others whose only concern is by a cruel parsimony

mony to make the utmost advantage of it ; yet the cultivation required to instruct the minds and form the morals of youth is almost utterly neglected. Children are not inspired with necessary knowledge, but must have their capacities prepared and their understandings furnished by variety of pains ; great care is requisite to instil the principles of a virtuous education into them, without which they degenerate into savages, and sometimes arrive at an untimely end. This is also too frequent an event of bastardy, but barbarism is at best its natural consequence; the offspring tho' it requires a far different culture, is bred after the form and manner of the brute. It is the peculiar happiness of the latter that, as its parents always strive to procure subsistence for it, while it cannot perform this office for itself, so does nature never fail to provide whatever else is requisite for the purpose of its welfare. She acts the part both of a faithful guardian and tutor to inferior animals, no corruption prevails among them for the

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young to be preserved from the contagion of, and no information is wanted but what is immediately conveyed by instinct; mankind afford the only instance in the creation where extraordinary instruction is required and yet omitted. The dire tendency of this neglect is too notorious to be enlarged upon, bastardy is with regard to the preservation of infants little better than the practice among the antients of exposing them in woods and forests; but what is this in comparison with the more dreadful consequence of abandoning them quite ignorant and defenceless to the wide-raging pestilence of wickedness throughout the world?

Thus does the brute appear more accomplished for its end in a great variety of respects than man, which leads me to consider another explanation that has been given of human irregularity; viz. that reason is a cold and sedentary principle which will not suffice alone, there must be propensities and passions in us or action
would

would entirely stagnate: nor can it be expected but that these (as they must be strong and powerful to impel) would sometimes overact their part and transport men beyond their proper bounds; this is the natural consequence of their necessary force and vehemence, which cannot be at all times so exactly poised and balanced as never to exceed their end.

This is plausible in theory, but flatly contradicted by experience in the example we have so much dwelt upon; since the rational principle is in inferior creatures less, the animal propensity stronger than in men, and yet there is no such confusion ever found among them. Instinct never operates with brutes unless in season, and then neither diverts them from the path they should pursue, nor drives them beyond its extent; it is neither faint, irregular, nor excessive in its impulse, but both conducts them without disorder through the proper road, and leaves them instantly as soon as they

arrive at their journey's end. How instinct in inferior animals follows unerringly the right line of action has been shewn already, and how it immediately stops at the determination of this, and never transports them beyond their proper bounds, let the following specimen determine.

It is not more remarkable of brutes that they always display the most earnest affection toward their young in infancy, than that this is utterly abolished when there is no further occasion for it; they no more injure their offspring by immoderate fondness than by cruelty and unconcern, for as they decline no necessary pains of nurture, so are the young no sooner arrived at a sufficiency of providing for themselves than they are industriously driven from the nest, or otherwise abandoned and obliged to seek for their own subsistence. The egregious misconduct of mankind in this particular is too notorious to be much insisted on; it may be

be safely averred that where affection prevails among them toward their children, many are as much injured by a foolish excess of fondness as by the contrary circumstances of barbarity and negligence. And yet it is hard to say which of the two extremes is most detrimental, that which we have so largely condemned before, or this that so many parents incur of training up their children in sloth and idleness, not obliging them to industry in any thing. If the former directly studied the ruin of the latter, they could not pursue a more effectual method to accomplish it.

Thus it appears that the misconduct of mankind proceeds not from the necessary force of passions, but from imperfection and disorder in the constitution of them, according to the conclusions drawn from the foregoing principles of Religion. The present account comes to the same end with that of freedom, society, and finite capacity; and whether we ascend
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up into Heaven, or go down to the brute creation, the consequence is still the same, no explanation but that of the fundamental pravity contended for will suit the circumstances of the question.

But I shall now pay some attention to what Mr. Hume advances on the other side of the subject. He says, "that on
 " the side of man we see a creature whose
 " thoughts are not limited by any narrow
 " bounds of time or place; who carries
 " his researches to the most distant regions
 " of this globe, and beyond this globe
 " to the planets and heavenly bodies;
 " looks backward to consider the origin
 " of the human race, casts his eye forward to see the influence of his actions
 " upon posterity, and the judgment that
 " will be formed of his character a thousand years hence: a creature who traces causes and effects to a very great
 " length and intricacy, extracts general
 " principles from particular appearances,
 " improves upon his discoveries, corrects
 " his

“ his mistakes and makes his very errors
 “ profitable. On the other hand we are
 “ presented with a creature the very re-
 “ verse of this, limited in its observations
 “ and reasonings to a very few objects
 “ that surround it, without curiosity, with-
 “ out foresight; blindly conducted by
 “ instinct and attaining in a very short time
 “ its utmost perfection, beyond which it
 “ is never able to advance a single step.
 “ What a wide difference is there between
 “ these creatures, and how exalted a notion
 “ must we entertain of the former in com-
 “ parison of the latter. [Vol. 1, Essay 14,
 pages 144, and 145.]

This is highly declamatory, but alto-
 gether void of reason and propriety; it
 very elaborately displays what no person
 ever doubted, viz. that man surpasses the
 brute in capacity and comprehension; but
 besides the great information this conveys
 us, what relation does it bear to the point
 in question? It may be as well insisted on
 how much an angel exceeds man in this
 particular,

particular, as how much man out does the brute; but here it must be confessed that Mr. Hume has one advantage on his side, viz. that the first falls not within the cognizance of the senses, so that there is no opportunity of comparing man with any creature above as there is below him. It signifies not however in either case how far the one is more intelligent than the other, but which is the most perfect creature in its kind; this is the proper object of consideration in the matter we have joined issue on, which Mr. Hume has totally forgotten; to say that man is more than brute or less than angel in understanding, being in reality to say nothing. The human race may move in a sphere that is more extensive and sublime than other animals which come within the reach of observation, but yet be far less fitted for their end; nor is it any contradiction to say that the former equally exceed the latter in capacity and corruption, in majesty and meanness, in dignity and depravity of nature.

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The brute as an inferior creature must be supposed more circumscribed in intellect than man, and besides this, what Providence performs by reason in the one, it fulfils by instinct for the most part in the other ; nor are we to consider in this case which is the brightest quality, but which is the most effectual for the purpose meant ; wherein I think it has been shewn that instinct has the advantage beyond comparison. For tho' the brutes are blindly, yet are they unerringly conducted by it to their end ; while on the contrary human reason is not only too infirm and feeble to command the reins of inclination, but also wretchedly ignorant in many respects how to direct and guide them. It is the great misfortune of our species that it is too much committed to the administration of this, which is thus manifoldly insufficient for its design ; nor need we wonder that inferior creatures have not the privilege like men of *profiting by mistakes*, since they commit none to correct or profit by ; and if in a

short time they arrive at the period of perfection, which they are never able to advance a single step beyond, this is likewise so much the better and happier for them; since they attain the summit that is sufficient for all the purposes of their being, and in this respect go far beyond what men with all their boasted prerogative of Reason and progression reach.

And with respect to the shining capacity of the latter for science, which Mr. Hume thus largely displays in all its brightness; there are some men indeed who have made wonderful discoveries in Nature, and extended their researches into the remotest scenes of Providence, but these have been as wonderful exceptions to the prevailing deficiency of their brethren. Very few are the heroes who perform such atchievements in science, *who look far back toward the origin of the human race, or trace causes and effects to any great length or intricacy; and even they*

they who do are rather examples of what the human mind is capable of acquiring by unusual efforts, than what it is commonly framed and fitted for the attainment of. How miserably do the multitude fail of a right conception of their most ordinary ends? Can there be any in which they are more particularly concerned, or in which they more egregiously err than the proper propagation, nurture, and education of their species? The discoveries that have been made of the heavenly bodies are highly valuable improvements, but I will presume to say, that it would be much more for the happiness of human life, if men were in general better judges of what more nearly interests and relates to them. *The influence of their actions on their posterity*, tho' of the next generation only, seems not sufficiently understood, even by *our polite and fashionable moralists*, "who (as " Mr. Hume informs us) all insist on the " dignity of human nature, and endeavor " to represent vice as unworthy of man

“and odious in itself.” [See the same Essay, page 142.] There are very few *polite and fashionable moralists* who look upon licentious intercourse with the female sex as a vice unworthy of man, or odious in itself; it is rather esteemed by them (like robbery among the Ancients) as the pride and glory of human nature, especially if conducted with any degree of gallantry. Indeed this irregularity meets with a very favourable reception from the world at large, instead of a deadly sin it passes for a very venial trespass, and men in general have neither the understanding to perceive, nor faith to believe that there is any injury to society or crime contained in the nature of the thing itself. Arbitrary restraint appears to them the only ground that its prohibition has to rest upon, than which there cannot be a more striking proof of their inability to distinguish between moral good and evil, which deficiency is the great impediment to the discernment of their degeneracy. For men cannot perceive

ceive how bad they are without an adequate idea of what they ought to be, and there is of course but little corruption of manners visible where there is but little sense of rectitude itself; in which case it is no wonder they are so blind to the depravity of nature, when they labour under the want of so many necessary mediums to the apprehension of it. For the notion of this must be collected from that of propriety, and the departure from it; but as the last of these cannot be perceived when the first is not apparent, so where corruption of manners is not in view, that of nature must be still farther from the sight. Mr. Hume acknowledges "that a very delicate sense
 "of morals, especially when attended
 "with somewhat of the misanthrope, is
 "apt to give a man a disgust of the world,
 "and make him to consider the course of
 "human affairs with too much spleen and
 "indignation." [Page 142.] The truth is that the higher sense any person has of morality without any degree of misanthropy,

thropy, the stronger will his persuasion be of the depravity of nature; without superior views indeed of the one there is no attaining of the other, unless men are raised in their conceptions above the ordinary level of their species, the latter is a conclusion without any premisses; if they look no further than the generality who take their notion of what is right and proper from what passes in perpetual practice, blind men may almost as well see light and colours.

There is nothing but this mental darkness which can account for the universal prejudice in favour of impurity; that the multitude should be guilty of it is no way surprising, for the vulgar (whether great or little) will break thro' all restraints and obligations to gratify their lusts and inclinations: but that the serious should look upon the sin with so much partiality or indifference, and that society should take so little pains for its prevention is a paradox that can only be resolved into the

the natural incapacity of the species to discern their end, as well as insufficiency to perform it.

For marriage is to mankind what cultivation is to lands, both parties commonly labour in it to promote the rising generation, and think they can never do too much for those that shall come after them ; it is a scene of industry, the fruits of which are increase and riches to society. On the contrary promiscuous intercourse is universal waste and desolation ; as men in matrimony think they can never strive too much, so in the contrary state do they imagine they can never do too little for their offspring ; the chief end proposed by it being to save the duties incident to husbands and parents by evading the due maintenance of wives and children, or not fulfilling this according to their station ; which it is the interest of mankind that all should endeavour to support or rather improve to their posterity if possible. And tho' a course of impurity, like breach
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of husbandry, may answer a particular purpose for a season, yet in the end it not only proves ruinous to the community but to the individuals that pursue it. They who involve themselves deeply in it very seldom thrive in secular any more than spiritual concerns, in attempting to remove the obligation it destroys the fruits and tears up the root of industry; and whatever may have been at first intended, it commonly proves at last an extremely burthenfome and expensive irregularity.

For besides the idleness and dissipation it is meant to make provision for by not doing justice to the demands of nature, it very seldom happens in this case that the woman has any more affection for the man than he consideration for her or the common concern of issue; the precariousness of her condition leads to rapine and depredation, her province is to plunder while she may in reason, which often concludes with grievous ruin to the unhappy

happy slave of this propensity and passion. I do not say that it is always attended with such bad effects, impurity like every other vice may be refined upon, and by careful policy prevented from producing many of its pernicious consequences. But if it be not always fatal, it is always dangerous, and in proportion as it prevails either more or less injurious; and every thing that has been advanced must be confessed the natural, tho' not the never-failing tendency of its practice.

For what if the offspring of this intrigue among the great be sometimes by particular fancy duly maintained and educated, will it be pretended that this is the ordinary consequence among mankind? Do we not commonly find that bastards are still esteemed as burthens, to be cast off on the easiest terms that may be by the wealthiest, but that on the contrary lawful children are embraced as blessings by the meanest, whom, whatever they may suffer for the sup-

port of, they would on no account be prevailed upon to part with? Besides, if the illegitimate have at any time justice done them, it is from the abundance and superfluity of the parent, not from what he must strive and labour to procure; there was scarce ever an instance known wherein they prospered by his industry, or their advancement in the world was made the great concern and business of his life. This is usually however the case in matrimony, which is justly defined by our Liturgy an ordinance, not for men to gratify their carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding, but for the procreation of children *to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord*, and for the mutual help, society, and comfort which the one party ought to have of the other in prosperity and adversity. It is a regular establishment for these necessary ends and nothing more, a due provision for the consequences entailed by Providence on generation among mankind. The woman
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wants the man to labour for her support, the man wants the woman to manage the fruits of his industry with prudence, and the children want the care of both for education and subsistence. There is not any thing required by marriage but what should be done on its own account, and would be done by both parties of their own accord, if mankind were worthy to be trusted, without any such solemnity. And as it is only a security for the performance of what is enjoined by nature (viz. the due support of each other and the issue) so is it the means of fulfilling this in as compleat a manner as our imperfect condition will admit; the end proposed is in the course of things most effectually answered by it, nor is there any departing from the salutary institution without in some measure undermining the foundation it is built upon. One species of fornication may be more pernicious than another, but every species of it is injurious to men, to women, or to children; to enume-

rate all the evils it abounds with would be impossible and endless, it bears perhaps both in its principles and effects a nearer analogy than is commonly imagined to crimes that are much more abhorred. But these I forbear to mention, it is sufficient to observe the ruin of industry, relations, duties, and the most endearing ties of nature that arises from it ; the reciprocal benefits and obligations of husbands, parents, wives, and children, are all destroyed or deeply endangered, and the property that should be deemed most precious is rendered the most precarious by it : commerce would in the same manner flourish by an entire communion of goods as the human species by the universal practice of this blind promiscuous passion, than which there is not a greater corruption of society to be imagined.

Men are sufficiently sensible of the necessity for women to avoid it on account of the confusion of offspring it must create, but have no idea of the obligation

tion being equally incumbent on themselves, which affords another striking instance of their extreme short-sightedness and folly. For besides the influence of their own example, which will always have a very powerful tendency to engage the other sex to do the like, as we have lately found by fatal experience in this nation; how is it possible for men to pursue a vagrant intercourse and women not, when the number of each is nearly equal, or rather that of the former (as appears by all the calculations) superior to the latter? The conduct of the one sex must involve the other, and if each man converse with various women, each woman must in like manner with various men; which shews that so far as the female sex is culpable by promiscuous intercourse, the male cannot be excused, and whatever guilt is contracted by the one the other in a general sense must equally partake of it. For not to call men the authors of the corruption that is so much condemned in women,

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it cannot be committed without the concurrence at least of the former, and there is no way to prevent the fundamental evil without the due care and conduct of both the parties. The injury of irregularity in this particular may be less to private families in males than females, wives are not liable to be so much hurt by it in husbands as husbands are in wives ; but confusion of offspring is equally the consequence of unlimited indulgence in each sex, and proceeds as much from many men conversing with one woman as from one woman conversing with many men. So far as the male sex are indiscriminate, the female must be promiscuous, and breach of order among the former cannot but proportionably destroy the due appropriation of the latter ; it being impossible that each woman should have her proper husband, if each man be not likewise restrained to his proper wife. To which let me add, that as confusion of offspring is the great evil to be prevented, this is on every account
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at least as much the due consideration of the man as woman; consequently he is as much obliged to abstain from any loose connection that may occasion it (this being as possible in him as her) and to guard against any dangerous commerce for the security of the great end proposed, as the woman is that his concern be not frustrated by her misconduct. From all these reflections it is apparent that whatever difference there may be in this irregularity with respect to individuals or private families, it is unalterably of the same malignant tendency with respect to society at large; it is equally an offence against God and nature, if we estimate it by its deadly fruits to the common body of mankind, of which every person is to esteem himself a necessary member and relation. But here lies the misfortune, this is too remote and abstract a consideration for most men to enter into, who very little reflect on what is due to God or their species, and whose ideas seldom extend farther than their

their selves or their immediate connections. Hence it is that whatever does not any particular injury to individuals or private families is looked upon as no evil in the nature of things, however it degrades mankind; which is one great cause both of the prevailing indifference to this vice, and of the inadequacy of human nature to its end; viz. the narrow sense each person has of the obligations that he labours under when compared with the vast variety and extent of relations that he bears.

But why do I insist on the insensibility of men to the remote consequences of this vice, when they are so blind to the dire effects it frequently occasions to their own persons? The loathsome and fatal diseases it is attended with, which (whether they were interwoven with it by the constitution of nature or not) are at present entailed on it in a peculiar manner, are too obvious to be insisted on. Marriage if duly observed, is free from them at least, but it is now time to proceed to

a conclusion of the subject, which I hope the reader will not consider as altogether an episode or digression. There is no sin so popular and at the same time pernicious among mankind as that of promiscuous intercourse, consequently none so proper to demonstrate the depravity and blindness of their nature by; it was particularly meet too for the comparison between them and brutes, and thus calculated to set aside all evasions that may be made from the consideration of our future being as an imaginary or superior state; by shewing that other creatures which fall within the cognizance of our senses, however inferior in their station are much more perfect in their kind than we are. If this will not convince men of the imperfection of their nature, nothing will; and tho' I have enlarged more particularly on the subject of impurity than was necessary to this purpose, yet it is to be hoped the great fatality and prevalence of this vice together with the partiality and prejudice entertained in favour of it

will excuse this attempt to expose it in all its consequences. There is not any circumstance wherein men stand in greater need to be convinced of their ignorance and folly, than such as they esteem the gallantry and glory of their nature, when in reality it reduces them below the level of the brute creation.

And besides the great popularity of fornication, so delicate in the nature of the subject, that Divines are in great precluded from the consideration of it. This has almost intirely banished it from the pulpit, where it cannot be enlarged upon as it ought; the declarations of holy writ may be denounced against it, but positive authority is almost a dead letter with men at present, when they see not any great evil in the thing itself. It has been a great misfortune likewise that where the exigency of marriage might have been more particularly explained, it has been too much considered as a mere matter of religious or positive institution;

stitution; men have not sufficiently entered into the indispensable demands of nature for it, or searched deep enough into the foundations of the obligation. Mr. Wollaston in his religion of nature says, "that marriages are made by solemn
 "contract, vow or oath, (and these per-
 "haps attended with some pledge or nup-
 "tial rites) by which the parties mutually
 "engage to live together in love, and
 "be faithful, assisting and the like, each
 "to other, in all circumstances of health
 "and fortune, till death parts them, I
 "take for granted; for all nations have
 "some form or other on these occasions."
 [page 291.]

But what he thus took for granted from the common practice of society, he should have more distinctly proved the obligation of from nature; and this in my opinion has been a great defect of most writers on the subject that has contributed largely toward the ignorance and profaneness of men with regard to

it; by leading them to consider marriage as a mere nudum pactum or positive institution, and the contrary practice as containing no material injury in itself. What Mr Wollaston takes for granted, if admitted, only shews that the engagement should be fulfilled when made, not that there is any necessity for entering into it on its own account: even the concurrent practice of all nations (should we be so liberal as to suppose this) would be no more than a presumptive and not a direct argument of its being a law of nature, which is antecedent to any civil establishment, and independant of all stipulations whatsoever. In short there are many reasons why we should not dwell on the practice of mankind, but go far beyond this for the true original and obligation of marriage; I fear we shall hardly find the institution any where subsisting in its proper purity but under the standard of the gospel. Were it common however to all nations I should hardly think of establishing an obligation of

of nature on this, much less on any form peculiar to christianity, which Mr. Wollaston's solemn contract seems to be, and even borrowed from our liturgy; since however just or necessary it may be on its own account, it may be considered notwithstanding as a groundless imposition of authority by the profane.

For the same reason I have not said any thing on the peculiar severity with which breach of chastity in women is treated by the world; so as to make them infamous, exclude them from the society of reputable persons, and drive them to a state of irretrievable shame and misery. These are the considerations that are commonly addressed to them in particular against it, and indeed they are very good admonitions in terrorem, but do not convince mankind at large of the deadly quality of the thing itself; on the contrary the penalties are supposed to exceed all bounds of nature and are accordingly looked upon as persecutions, which not
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only diminishes the proper odium of the offence, but recommends it to undue favour and connivance. I thought it more proper therefore to insist on an absolute necessity of the strongest provisions for the security of a regular commerce in both sexes, to shew that nothing can be of greater importance to human nature, and if the breach of it in some cases be treated with too much rigour, it is in general by no means looked upon in so heinous a light as it deserves. It is requisite in these licentious times to make the obligation as strong as possible on all, instead of loosening it on any; but unhappily neither the rules of religion nor censures of society are at present calculated for this purpose, the former being looked upon as too severe and the latter even cruel; so that it answers a much better end to vindicate their propriety than to demonstrate the impropriety of offending by them. There cannot be more striking instances of this undue relaxation of opinion than the extraordinary

traordinary dispensations that have been frequently granted by the Legislature for the marriage of adulterous persons during the life of the injured party, in defiance of all policy of marriage, as well as the express prohibition of our blessed Saviour; to which I may add the further proposals that have been made to abolish all restraint on fornication, by removing the only cognizance that can be taken of it in our law as a reproach upon humanity. I mean the late attempt of reformation that was made to destroy the authority of the spiritual court in this particular; if the rage of which had not been corrected, even incest would have been placed beyond possibility of legal punishment. Such is the profligacy among the highest and lowest classes of mankind that it may be a matter of much juster consideration, whether it be not proper to provide for a more effectual exercise of the jurisdiction against the growing evil of concubinage as well as withhold the encouragement that has been given

given to its more alarming consequence of adultery. But this is in great measure hidden from the eyes of men at present, I have therefore endeavoured to hold it up to view, and supply the part in which others have been most defective: by shewing that marriage (or a strict union of one man with one woman and for life, so as to exclude loose intercourse, polygamy and divorce) is not in any respect an arbitrary institution, but in every particular of essential obligation to the constitution of mankind, independant of all law and custom; tho' nothing is more necessary to be supported and secured by them. And I hope I have not misemployed my time, while I was engaged on the subject of depravity a speculative doctrine of the faith, in thus improving it to the immediate purposes of morality, and making it subservient to illustrate the most important obligations of mankind.

To return to Mr. Hume, for I cannot prevail upon myself to part with him
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or degeneracy as yet; he says, "that
 "one method commonly employed to
 "destroy the dignity of human nature
 "is by making an unfair representation
 "of the case and insisting only on its
 "weaknesses." Perhaps he may have
 looked upon the irregularity I have so
 much dwelt upon as one of these; not
 to say any thing further of this however
 in particular, I must add in general that
 such weaknesses (as he is pleased to call
 them) are much more prevailing than
 the great and eminent qualities he has
 thought fit to enumerate, and that it is
 equally a false representation of the case
 to insist only on the excellencies as only
 on the infirmities of human nature. If
 we mean to make a fair enquiry into
 truth and not flatter or misguide ourselves
 and others, we should form our estimate
 from both. But Mr. Hume will be most
 effectually condemned if we compare
 with the first quotation that we made
 from him what he says in the 146th
 page of the same Essay. "'Tis also very

“ usual to compare one man with another,
 “ and finding very few whom we call wise
 “ and virtuous we are apt to entertain
 “ a contemptible notion of our species in
 “ general. That we may be sensible of
 “ the fallaciousness of this way of rea-
 “ soning, we may observe that the ho-
 “ nourable appellations of wise and virtuous
 “ are not annexed to any particular de-
 “ gree of those qualities of wisdom and
 “ virtue, but arise altogether from the
 “ comparison we make between one man
 “ and another. When we find a man
 “ arrive at such a pitch of wisdom as is
 “ uncommon, we pronounce him a wise
 “ man; so that to say there are very
 “ few wise men in the world is really
 “ to say nothing, since 'tis only by their
 “ scarcity that they merit that appellation.
 “ Were the lowest of our species as wise
 “ as Tully or my Lord Bacon, we should
 “ still have reason to say there are very
 “ few wise men; for in this case we
 “ should exalt our notions of wisdom,
 “ and should not pay a singular honour
 “ to

“to any one who was not singularly
“distinguished by his talents.”

I shall not enter into the fallaciousness of the reasoning which Mr. Hume condemns, it is sufficient for me to shew that it is his own, and that he has egregiously involved himself in his own cobweb and chicane. For if in estimating mankind we are not to elevate our ideas to the perfection of the wise and virtuous, it is certainly an unfair method of proceeding to pursue this conduct when we compare mankind with brutes; from the former of whom if it be absurd to expect any thing like the wisdom of Tully and Lord Bacon, it must be more ridiculous to insist on the vast disparity of the latter to it. But whoever will be at the pains to review the description Mr. Hume affords of the two species at large in opposition to each other will find that this is the very method he pursues; men must not be compared with the highest of their race, but brutes must and with

none others; for the qualities he there ascribes to mankind are such as are only applicable to the best and wisest that subsist among them; those who, as he observes, are very few, and in comparison with whom we are apt to entertain a contemptible notion of the species in general. Tully and Lord Bacon can claim no brighter qualities than what he mentions, nor can even they aspire to these without a large alloy of imperfection and weakness, not to say any thing worse concerning them. The self repugnancy as well as partiality of Mr. Hume in this particular is too apparent I presume to require any further explanation,

There is one very proper observation however which he makes, viz: "that
 "in this controversy some exalt our
 "species to the skies and represent man
 "as a kind of human demigod, who
 "derives his origin from Heaven and
 "retains evident marks of his lineage
 "and descent. Others insist on the blind
 "fides

“fides of human nature, and can dis-
 “cover nothing except vanity wherein
 “man furpaffes other animals which he
 “affects fo much to despife.”

This is a very juft description of the difpute, and it is by fuch means, that contradictions are kept up among mankind; each fide admits only one half of the cafe and excludes the other from the question, while truth lies between the contending parties and is only to be represented by a proper compofition from the principles of both.

This I fhall fhortly endeavour to perform, but before I proceed to it beg leave to mention another evasion, which, tho’ Mr. Hume is not immediately concerned in it, is yet fo common on the fubject and fo nearly related to the foregoing that I cannot avoid the introduction of it here. This is to confound the right fyftem with the real ftate of nature, as if the latter could not admit of any deviation

deviation from the former. Thus Dr.
 Foster contends against depravity, "that
 "if we set aside the arguments from
 "the perfections of God it will unde-
 "niably appear there is no such thing
 "from taking a short view of human
 "nature itself. For what is the true
 "idea of it? It is not this, reason at
 "the helm conducting and governing
 "the inferior principles? And therefore
 "when the passions prevail against reason,
 "must there not be a perverted and
 "unnatural state? Shall we form our idea
 "of human nature from the brutal part
 "of it, or from the more noble and
 "excellent the intellectual? Nature is
 "a general term to denote those laws by
 "which the Creator governs the universe
 "and the established order of things.
 "Now this order with respect to man-
 "kind is that the understanding and
 "reflection should preside over appetite
 "and instinct and regulate all their im-
 "pulses; so that whatever in their tem-
 "per and conduct is contrary to the
 "rational

“ rational and moral principal, whatever
 “ is vicious must of necessity be at all
 “ times irregular, and a contradiction to
 “ human nature upon the whole.” [Fos-
 ter’s Natural Religion, Vl. 1, Chap. 6,
 Page 145.]

This is undoubtedly the proper conduct of mankind, there cannot be a better scheme of morality provided for them, but the question is whether nature be found in fact to correspond with its design, or the actual state of man can be said to coincide with the moral institution of his being? Is reason constantly at the helm, conducting and governing the inferior principles? Or do the understanding and reflection regulate all the impulses of appetite and instinct? I grant that whenever the passions prevail against reason it must be a perverted and unnatural state, if a disordered one be such; but this is so frequently the case that we are thereby forced to conclude a propensity to disorder in the subject.

But,

But, says Dr. Foster, shall we form our idea of human nature from the brutal part of it or form the more noble and excellent, the intellectual? I answer, from neither of them alone but from the operation of both together; whatever is good, bad or indifferent in its composition is equally to be taken into view, when we enter into consideration of its actual state. It may as well be said that nature is not prone to sickness as to sin, and that there can be no such thing as a valetudinary constitution; because this is as much a contradiction to our physical as the other is to our spiritual well-being, and consequently must be an unnatural state. Whatever is contrary to the dictates of the rational and moral principle, whatever is vicious must of necessity be at all times irregular and a contradiction to human nature, if we mean the proper system to be pursued by it. But it is only to define nature to be rectitude itself, to confound the right order with the real condition of it, and the business

is done at once; there can be no such thing as depravity or corruption in it, for this must be equally as repugnant to nature as perfection. This reminds me of a very ingenious argument of the orthodox to prove that matter cannot be made by Omnipotence to think, viz. that it must cease in this case to be matter; it being impossible that an unthinking should be made a thinking being without an essential change of nature. This is very true, its nature must be fundamentally altered from what it was, before it can be endowed with the privilege of thought; there is an utter incompatibility between insensibility and perception, but this is no objection to the possibility of annexing the latter to any being while it remains a solid substance; it was only to define matter however to be that which thinketh not, or make insensibility its essence, and the demonstration was at once compleated; it certainly could not be made to think without a destruction of its nature.

Thus according to the foregoing argument there was no departing from perfection without equally departing from human nature likewise, which consequently could admit of no depravity or corruption. The artifice was altogether unworthy of Dr. Foster, and a very proper object of ridicule for Fielding in his *History of a Foundling*, where he justly exposes this and the opposite extreme in the characters of Square and Thwackum; the former of whom is introduced contending that human nature is the perfection of all virtue and that vice is a deviation from it as deformity of body is, the latter that the mind of man since the fall is nothing but a sink of iniquity till purified and redeemed by grace." [Book 2. Chap. 3.]

It is by such means that the subject has been degraded, and Fielding has herein displayed a profound knowledge of the follies of both parties; in order to steer clear of which and fulfill my promise of
doing

doing justice to the truth by a due modification and mixture of the principles of both I observe in the language of Mr. Hume, that man indisputably retains the marks of deriving his origin from Heaven, and is thus far in his nature allied to angels in that he equally seems ordained for immortality hereafter, tho' at the same time he falls short of the brutes that perish as to the perfection of his end at present. To say that he exceeds the latter in nothing but vanity is false, but that he outdoes them in this as much as in reason or any other prerogative he has to boast in what universal experience and observation justifies. In short man may be compared to a planet that has broken from its orbit, or if this be too extravagant and bold an image, to a magnificent and stately mountain that exalts its head to the skies but is overhung with clouds, and appears too plainly rent from its first foundation by a formidable and tremendous earthquake; it has remains enough of grandeur, but these are by no means

regular and are in great measure to be esteemed as ruins. The brute is not so much in respect of sublimity and greatness to this mountain as the meanest mound, but has the advantage of being more uniform in its parts and more perfectly corresponding with its end. This seems the just distinction of the matter, which will I hope remove any offence that may have been conceived in the beginning of this comparison at the preference bestowed upon the brute creation, and banish all remaining objection to the notion of depravity from the pride and prejudice as well as reason and understanding of mankind.

This then I now consider as fully proved, its original however may still deserve a stricter investigation and the question yet remains how we are to reconcile the circumstance of so oblique and corrupt a creature as man with the formation of an Omnipotent and perfect Maker? This has been a matter of great perplexity

perplexity in all ages, Philosophers as well as Divines have been confounded by it; and the difficulty seems increased when we consider, that this being confessedly so inadequate and in many respects repugnant to the end of his creation is the chief production of God on earth, the representative Lord and Vice-roy whom he has ordained to bear his image over his works, and whom he has made all things in this world to bow down and be subservient to. Some have even argued from hence against the supremacy and power of God, others have not scrupled to challenge his purity and perfection, allegeing that if his dominion be absolute above, he must needs bear too great a resemblance to the vicegerent whom he establishes on earth; and to men of a different description has the difficulty appeared so formidable, that they have been driven to take refuge in denying the fact of depravity itself, in opposition to all the evidences of nature and chief doctrines of that very faith they

they meant to support and serve. The most usual solution is that this corruption will not be of long continuance, but will shortly cease and be succeeded by a better constitution. This appears in some measure to mitigate the force of the objection, but is only in truth a palliative or slight evasion, for the question still remains, why was such depravity ordained in the beginning? The badness of the present constitution indeed demonstrates that it must be totally destroyed, but this is no satisfaction to the enquiry why the foundation was thus wretchedly laid, and the fabric compounded of such rotten materials in the first place. It rather confesses than removes the objection arising from the miserableness of the structure, nor are the original ability and integrity of the architect by any means recommended by it; on the contrary the one or other of these qualifications without some further account must necessarily fall to the ground with nature. Here then the extraordinary light of scripture

scripture appears very seasonably in aid to solve this dark enigma, which teaches us that the constitution of the species is widely altered from what it was when it came forth from the hands of its Sovereign Former; man broke the fundamental law of his existence and thereby became that ruin which we now perceive him. How far this will avail alone toward an entire removal of the objection I shall soon more fully examine; in the mean while I must beg leave to observe one great criterion of truth in the History of Revelation, viz. that it is at unity with itself and perfectly correspondent in all its parts.

The Socinian, as we have seen, supposes the moral constitution of man compleat in itself at present, yet ardently contends for a more desirable establishment in future, the incoherence of which we have amply shewn before. The scripture on the other hand, as it recommends the exigency of a better life, very wisely
points

points out the imperfection of our present nature, and expediency of its fundamental change in order to this ; to which permit me to add, that the sacred oracle no less wisely insists on the present principle of our existence not being what it was in the beginning, than on its not being what it should be now and shall be in the sequel. For next to the presumption of a future amendment in the constitution of things, is that of its having been perfectly framed as it should have been in the first place ; the most suitable supposition certainly which we can form of the Sovereign Being is, that the creation not only will be what it ought, but also was originally according to his construction ; and that he has no misconduct of his own to rectify, but corruption introduced by others.

There cannot be a more natural transition than from the one to the other of these conclusions ; and as we heretofore asked, how can any reflect on the necessity

cessity of our total change while they refuse to admit the internal disorder of our present being, so does the question now occur with equal force, how can they contend for the certainty of a new Heaven and Earth in which dwelleth righteousness, and deny that such was the primeval establishment of things? Can that which must be believed of the Divine Being in future times be a fact incredible of him in past, or is there any indignity in supposing that the same perfection was the original, which in honour to God all men maintain will be the final constitution of the world?

The blindness of this repugnancy is too plain to be enlarged upon, I shall therefore only add that there is so necessary a connection throughout the fabric of Redemption, that you must either admit or reject the whole together, there is no accepting of one part without the other. The scripture fully harmonizes with itself in all the three particulars of

innocence past, depravity present, and righteousness to come, the last of these essentially involving both of the preceding suppositions; the Socinian attains one half of this consistency but nothing more, he acts very properly in not allowing the constitution of the species to have ever been better than it is while he affirms this in itself to be as it should be now; thus far he agrees with his own principle indeed, but he should have denied the necessity of a future state as well as fall in order to be complete, his fundamental doctrine being equally incompatible with each, and not less repugnant to the one than to the other of these conclusions. The moral to be drawn from which striking contradiction is, that error may be plausible and in some points consistent, but in the end will overthrow and destroy itself; truth is on the other hand always uniform, and the more thoroughly it is examined, the more perfectly it is found to correspond in all its parts.

The

The alteration of nature from the divine archetype and original being once presumed, the descent of all men from one single pair and their corruption in it are further particulars that cannot but be obvious and apparent, since they so clearly correspond with the depravity of the whole human species. For this being an essential change of the divine workmanship and production can only be accounted for by their derivation from one common origin; whatever source is vitiated the streams that flow from it must be impure of course, and whenever this is universally the case it proves a corruption from the first fountain-head; the effect is not more visible a priori from the cause than the cause is a posteriori from the effect. Or to use another comparison, if any impression be injured in its original, such as was that of the divine image and perfection upon man, all the copies that are produced from it thus damaged and defaced must bear a suitable resemblance to it; consequently
the

the universal disfigurement of these or alteration in the same respects from what ought to be and in reason clearly was, demonstrates, that they were all derived from the same imperfect standard in the beginning. This is a necessary conclusion unless we suppose the fall of many first parents among mankind after the similitude of Adam and Eve, which is altogether as arbitrary and groundless an imagination in its own nature as it is void of authority and support in history. For nothing is more unphilosophical than to infer many causes of an event when one alone is sufficient to account for it, and we may as well presume many Deities from the creation as many falls of the nature above mentioned from the depravity of mankind without exception; the harmony that prevails throughout the universe at large is not a more convincing proof of one common cause of order, than the corruption of all mankind is of one common origin and occasion of disorder in them. One Being of Supreme
power

power and perfection is enough to explain the former, and therefore a plurality of first causes is rejected as superfluous; in like manner the fall of one first pair is necessary and sufficient to account for the degeneracy of all mankind, consequently more occasions and means of it are needless; the Manichees were right in referring it to one universal cause, however they erred in attributing it to one independant evil being.

I scruple not to alledge this as proof of the descent of all men from the same parentage in the beginning, whatever difficulty there may be to account for the peopling of America or other matters of the like nature. It is very justly observed by Sir Thomas Brown concerning matters of antiquity and such as are decided by history, "that if their first beginnings escape a due relation, they fall into great obscurities that future ages seldom bring to a proper resolution." Men may conjecture a long time about such affairs in
vain,

vain, philosophy will hardly ever reach them; but that the original inhabitants of America were descended from the same parentage with the Europeans, by whatever means it came to pass, there is I think a very strong presumption in that the former laboured as much under a corruption of the divine image as the latter. All were equally the sons of Adam in this particular, which is an argument of their natural descent from him very similar to what is urged for the regular generation of animals, &c; “the contrary supposition to which, says Dr. Derham, “is so generally exploded now that I “shall not undertake the disproof of it. “It is so evident that all animals, yea “vegetables too owe their production to “parent animals and vegetables, that I “have often admired at the prejudices “and sloth of the ancient Philosophers “in so easily taking upon trust the Aristotelian or rather Egyptian doctrine of “equivocal generation; that when they “saw flies, frogs and lice, for instance, to
“be

“ be male and female, and accordingly to
 “ ingender, lay eggs, &c. they could ever
 “ imagine any of these creatures could
 “ be spontaneously produced.” [Derham’s
 Physico—Theology, book 4, chap 15,
 page 244.]

The reason of this imagination was that they were incapable in many cases of conceiving how these creatures could proceed from parents; the proper generation of them could not be traced, as men may not be able to give a satisfactory account at present of the manner in which the Americans were derived from our first parents, therefore many conclude them Aborigenes. There is in every respect a great analogy between this supposition and that of anomalous generation; the latter has been confidently urged against Creation as the former has against Revelation, and probably each is alike the result of ignorance and want of information. Equivocal generation has indeed been more successfully combated and overthrown, the
 proper

proper ways and means of the production of several creatures which were supposed to be spontaneously formed having been discovered ; yet there are frequent instances of animals the regular propagation of which remains a mystery to this day, or is at least but lamely accounted for ; therefore the great Naturalist Mr. Ray, very earnestly recommends the full discovery thereof as a matter of the utmost importance. “ For, says he, if this point “ be cleared, and it be demonstrated that “ all creatures are generated univocally “ by parents of their own kind, and that “ there is no such thing as spontaneous “ generation in the world, one great prop “ of Atheism is taken away and their “ strongest hold demolished ; they cannot “ then exemplify their foolish hypothesis “ of the generation of man and other “ animals at first by the like of frogs and “ insects at this present day.” [Wisdom of God in the Creation, page 322]

It

It is commonly allowed that there is no great room for apprehension now concerning the being of a God, whatever may be the success of this enquiry; but I could wish for the sake of Revelation which is not yet so firmly established, that the peopling of America and other places from this continent was as particularly explained as the propagation of insects produced in the midst of putrefaction has been from parent-animals. Such proof would undoubtedly be more satisfactory and decisive, in the mean while however I urge the present as not a despicable presumption, that since all inherit the same species of imperfection, which deviates widely from the divine original and standard of their nature, they are all alike descended from the same fallen pair and principle of corruption. I cannot but think that this conclusion bears a just analogy to that which naturalists have heretofore so much insisted on, viz. that all animals are produced from parents of the same kind

and quality, (however difficult some instances are to be accounted for) because they all partake of the same principles and properties of generation.

The depravation of human nature in two first parents being a fact deducible from reason, nothing can appear more satisfactory in the next place than the account which revelation gives us of the means it was occasioned by. Man broke the fundamental law of his establishment and being, what wonder then if the consequence of this were eccentricity and confusion? God, as we are with the greatest probability informed, not only created him in righteousness but gave him a prescription likewise that would have proved a sovereign remedy to preserve him against all declension from it; this he transgressed and violated, the natural effect of which was his becoming a prey to depravity and corruption; when the vital principle of any system is subverted, or the basis on which any building

ing

ing rests is undermined, if the structure after that should stand, how can it otherwise remain than in a state of obliquity and disorder?

The corruption of nature in two first parents by breach of an original law it was established on being thus demonstrated, the penalty supposed in a preceding chapter to have been ordained upon this is equally as plain in reason as it is positively expressed in Revelation. For when the image of God in man became defaced, the constitution of the divine work unhinged and broken from its foundation, what could have been expected less than that God would instantly destroy the chief performance of his hands made thus unworthy of him, raze man out of the book of life and banish him from the creation. The apprehension of this does not appear more obvious from the denunciation (the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die) than from the nature of the event itself; it seems equally

extraordinary from the incident that happened as from the positive obligation of the law, that God did not immediately annihilate the whole human race on its account. How the violation of the forbidden fruit in particular should occasion such fatal change in the moral constitution of the species indeed is not apparent to our Reason; for the means of its production we must depend upon positive information, which is all the evidence that an affair of this kind is capable of admitting. As to the manner in which any one thing is done in nature, it is not understood by us if examined duly to the bottom; Philosophers would be equally at a loss to shew antecedently why poison operates such dire effects upon the vital frame at present, or why that which is poison to one creature is sometimes nourishment to another, so that the preceding is by no means a difficulty peculiar to Divines. But that mankind have really broken the fundamental law and perfection of their being, however

(however it was done) I say is what seems highly probably, and that they were not immediately destroyed upon this as extraordinary and surprising to human Reason. Whatever was the particular occasion of their corruption, the most mysterious circumstance is that they were permitted to continue with the privilege of regaining eternal life and happiness after having been rendered thus obnoxious to perdition by it ; which being the case, there must be allowed a wonderful dispensation in their favour wherein is laid the ground-work and foundation of Redemption.

For after this nothing more is necessary to be shewn than the necessity of satisfaction for non-performance of the penalty incurred, which has been amply manifested in a preceding chapter; the suppositions that have here been proved being the only fundamentals that were there required in order to demonstrate the extraordinary obligation of atonement.

But

But there is no occasion for having recourse to this, Free-thinkers themselves will furnish me with very sufficient argument for the purpose; and accordingly I ask no other materials or grounds than they supply me with to finish the demonstration I propose to make.

For nothing is more commonly urged against the christian plea that God is not the author of depravity in nature, than that (if there be any such effect) it is a matter of very little concern or consequence who was the immediate occasion of it. Free toleration, say they, differs not materially from direct establishment, and is a sufficient proof that the grantor thought very lightly of its object and could not have any extraordinary aversion to the evil. Whoever is any way acquainted with the controversy on Original Sin between Deists and Divines must know that this is a great point in dispute between them; the latter endeavour to shelter themselves behind the plea of its
not

not being a direct appointment of the Deity, the former say that this avails but little for his excuse while it has his voluntary toleration and connivance. Here the matter rests and it must be confessed apparently to the advantage of Free-thinkers; but it is very remarkable that the most striking objections against the common doctrine of divines are frequently the strongest proofs of scripture, when the scheme of it is rightly understood and put together. The present argument in particular against permission of depravity is the most powerful that can be urged for the necessity of atonement, the accomplishment of which entirely removes and obviates the objection to the former. Had the permission mentioned been granted without any antipathy or reluctance, the exception to it would have been unanswerable; but this was not the case, and toleration differs very widely from connivance or unconcern, where it was not vouchsafed without the utmost difficulty and aversion. Thus
much

much is fully testified then by the submission of Christ to incarnation and death, the most wonderful condescension of the Deity that can be imagined to what must have been every way obnoxious in itself. I need not here expatiate how displeasing in its own nature the humiliation of the Eternal Son must have been to every other person of the Godhead as well as to himself; nothing but the common concern of holiness could have made such a measure acceptable to either, and since it was unanimously ordained the means whereby alone depravity should be endured, we cannot but conclude the extremity of Divine aversion to this from the heavy charge annexed to the toleration of it. The honour of God must be secure from all imputation of partiality or indifference to sin, when it appears that he did not suffer it without suffering himself and being made an extraordinary sacrifice on its account.

Thus

Thus is the sacrifice of Christ as suitable to reconcile the permission of depravity with the existence of divine perfection in the beginning, as to shew the certainty of punishment upon disobedience in future; as from the stupendousness of the measure there never can be any hope of its application in consequence of sin hereafter, so from the same consideration may we conclude the natural antipathy of the Sovereign Being to the original admission of the latter; which could not have been so fully manifested as by the humiliation of himself on its account. Even supposing that the non-punishment of disobedience could have been expiated by the sufferings of some inferior being in our behalf (which I shall shortly shew could not be done) it is evident that God could not declare his hatred of sin so decisively as by not dispensing with himself in pursuance of its permission; it is plain at this rate that he must have had some extraordinary end in suffering it which could not otherwise have been obtained, or he

never would have endured it; as will be explained more fully in the sequel to the further manifestation of his glory.

Here I cannot but animadvert on another objection to the sacrifice of Christ, which I have not before considered; viz. the absurdity of supposing that the legislator should both receive and *pay* the satisfaction for sin and violation of his law.

But admitting atonement necessary the lawgiver is certainly the most proper person to bestow it, since he thereby lays the dispensation on himself and charges his own person with the incumbrance of it. As to receiving any advantage from the satisfaction, God is no way capable of this but as it supports the honour of his government, the reverence of his attributes and laws, which are great and noble ends for the good of his creation, and most effectually secured by the expenditure of an immense atonement by himself. With respect to the magnitude

tude of that conferred I shall say nothing more, it being obvious that the most exalted creature could not have made expiation for sin by any humiliation of himself like that of the Son of God, and a dependant being has too much obligation of his own to offer satisfaction for the forfeiture of others. But if it could have been done it would not on any account have been so honourable to the Deity, or effectual to the purpose mentioned; a dispensation from the penalty of a fundamental law should always be at the expence of the sovereign power that grants it, because this is the most substantial remedy against any idea of its repetition, or connivance at the evil that attends it. Even admitting that an inferior being might have performed an equivalent for the breach committed, yet besides that God would not have displayed his generosity and goodness equally by permitting this he could not have shewn his wisdom and purity so illustriously as by discharging it himself; for

what greater averſion can a lawgiver diſplay to evil, or determination for the law it was occaſioned by tranſgreſſion of, than when he obliges himſelf to ſuffer on account of the one, and undergo the greateſt humiliation rather than the authority of the other ſhall be diminiſhed.

Thus are the objections of Free-thinkers, when duly weighed and properly digeſted, the ſtrongeſt proofs in every reſpect of the expediency of atonement by a Divine perſon; which all the arguments of the orthodox have hitherto done nothing but to perplex and confound. For where it is ſo neceſſary to reconcile the original permiſſion of evil with the Divine perfection it is entirely overlooked, and never thought of; God is repreſented as allowing that without any kind of difficulty againſt which he ſhould have ſhewn extreme averſion, and thus is his adminiſtration expoſed on one ſide to very formidable objection. But what aggravates the matter is, that the antipathy which ſhould have

have been expressed against the permission is afterward urged against the remedy and redress of evil ; for when the future recovery of man from the corruption of sin comes into question, a circumstance that is as essential as the foregoing was exceptionable, here the mighty exigency of the sacrifice is insisted on to reconcile that which is every way expedient on its own account, and instead of requiring any atonement or dispensation is the indispensable demand of rectitude itself. Free indulgence seems vouchsafed to the introduction of sin, and displeasure only shewn against its removal ; whereby the conduct of Heaven has been doubly darkened, and Revelation instead of a superior light been represented an extraordinary cloud or rather eclipse to nature ; the difficulty of depravity being very little, if at all, explained by the supposition of its free admission more than its direct establishment, but on the contrary greatly aggravated by having its removal clogged with such stupendous objection and incumbrance. The

The occasion of this strange conduct is easy to be accounted for from the misinterpretation of what succeeded upon the fall, according to which the Divine displeasure would have been exerted not in a proper way for the prevention of sin at first by the extinction of mankind without atonement, but in the most improper manner by permitting the propagation of it in the present state to their perdition after it. This fundamental error was the cause of the satisfaction being turned upside down, if I may be allowed the expression, and inverted utterly from its foundation as to the meaning and occasion of it; after which entire perversion of the doctrine, it is no wonder that it should appear to the most able Divines a mystery beyond human apprehension. Bishop Sherlock says, "The reasons which made it either necessary or proper for Christ to die for the sins of mankind may be removed out of our sight; but the justice and equity of God in redeeming men are things that
" the

“the angels desire and are concerned to
 “look into, and the reasons of Providence
 “in this great affair may be discernible to
 “the highest orders of intellectual beings,
 “tho’ not discoverable by us the lowest.
 [See Discourse the 2d, on Heb. 25th.]
 In like manner Bishop Butler says, “How
 “and in what particular way the sacri-
 “fice of Christ had an efficacy for ob-
 “taining pardon of sin, there are not
 “wanting persons who have endeavoured
 “to explain, but I do not find the scrip-
 “ture has explained it. And if the scrip-
 “ture have, as surely it has, left this
 “matter of the satisfaction of Christ mys-
 “terious, left something in it unrevealed,
 “all conjectures about it must be, if not
 “evidently absurd, yet at least uncer-
 “tain.” [Analogy of Religion, chap. v.
 page 305.]

When I consider the contradictory views
 that men have been accustomed to behold
 this matter in, and the many miserable
 shifts they have accordingly been obliged
 to

to make, I am not in the least surprized that all attempts to reconcile it should be condemned by the best judges as chimerical and presumptuous. Great allowance is to be made for what was said under the influence of former principles and conjectures, all of which, I grant, were not only unsatisfactory but absurd upon the face of them; so far am I from objecting to what his Lordship says with respect to these, that, on the contrary, I esteem it a mark of his good sense and candour not to admit such wretched explanations, and claim his authority in confirmation of what I have advanced against them. Thus far I have his Lordship on my side at least, viz. as to one half of the question, or the futility of what has been already done on this head; but while I make all due allowance, and give credit for supposed impossibility of success from such endeavours, I must at the same time contend for freedom of enquiry, to which the book of Revelation as well as Nature is laid open; nor is it any just objection
to

a conclusion drawn from the principles of the one more than the other, that the inference is not expressly taught us; whatever is agreeable to or deducible from those of either may with sufficient Reason be presumed. I should not indeed have attempted any thing like what I have done, had I not been led by undesigned steps, or to use the language of his Lordship, by tracing on obscure hints dropt accidentally by nature and coming in my way by chance, to what appeared to me the completion of the matter. At first I only proposed to reconcile the doctrine of Atonement with that of Retribution; to remove objection, and rescue the former from repugnancy was at that time all I aimed at, after I had accomplished which I was surprised with the direct demonstration of it from established principles of the fall without any other assistance or support from scripture. But I was far from conceiving yet, that the exigency of satisfaction was capable of a strict proof from Reason, or deducible from fundamental principles of nature; large suppositions of fact appeared to me requir-

ed, and tho' the account derived from Revelation sufficiently coincided with itself (one part of it when admitted involving the necessity of another) yet I thought the whole might be objected to as an extravagant proceeding, or extraordinary system raised in air without any suitable foundation in nature to support it. This induced me to the last enquiry, which whatever it may do to others, has afforded me satisfaction with regard to every doctrine of Redemption from apparent fact in the creation; I began with the principles of Revelation, and concluded with those of nature, the one led me unexpectedly to the other, and there cannot be a fairer presumption of the truth than when arguments *a priori et posteriori* thus meet together, or when the further a person advances on a subject, the more conviction does he obtain from the different views and ways of considering it. This I can only say for myself at present, but if the reader have received any satisfaction like what I have done, I think I can assure him of much greater in the sequel.

The END of the First VOLUME.



